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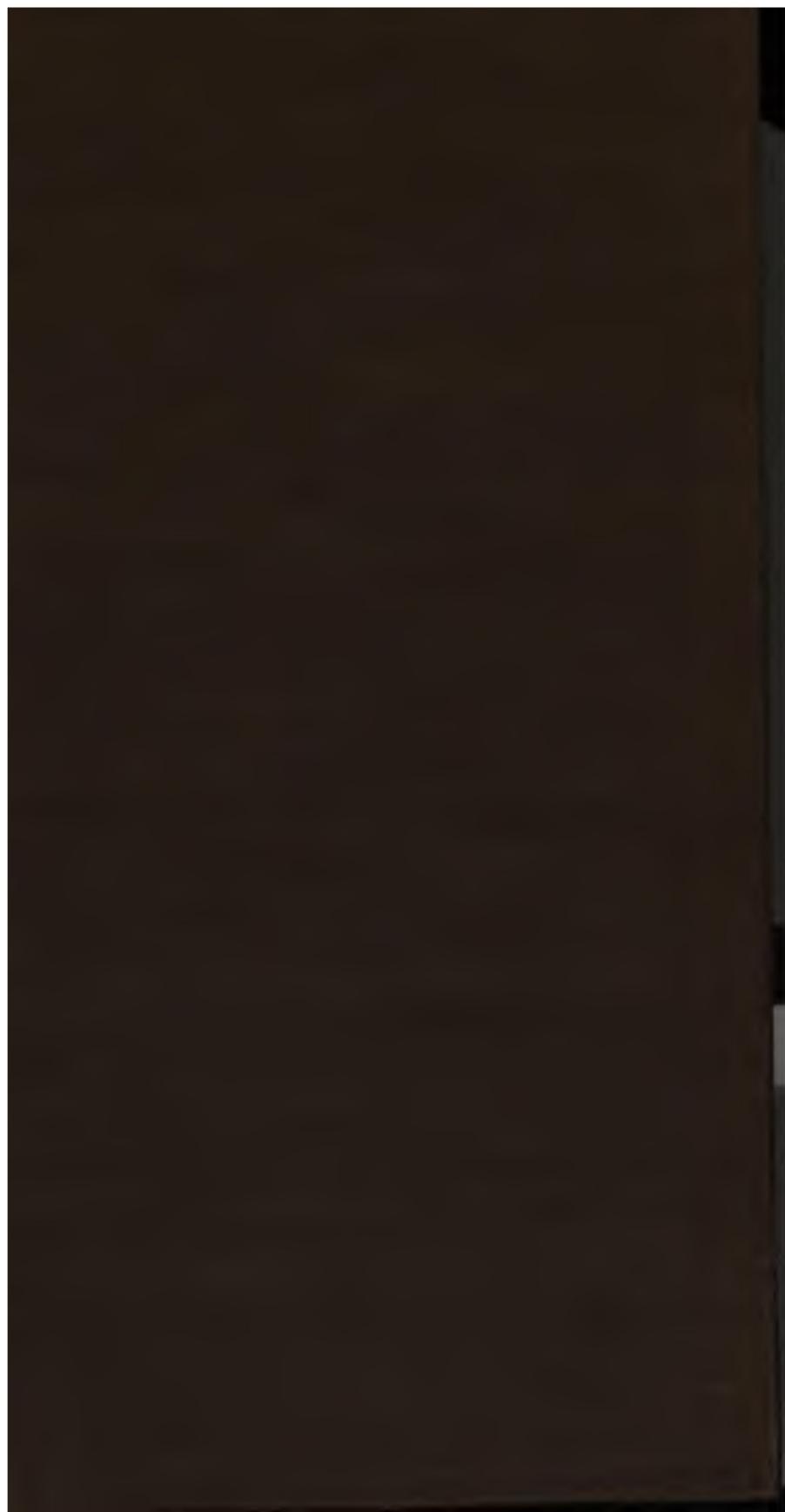
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CLASS OF 1882

1918



THE
HERMIT OF WARKWORTH,
AND
THE TWO CAPTAINS,
BY THE AUTHOR OF 'UNDINE,' 'ASLAUGA'S KNIGHTS,' ETC.



EDITED BY A LADY.

"Love, quiet, yet flowing deep, as the Rhine among rivers;
Lasting, and knowing not change — it walketh with Truth and Sincerity."
PROVERBIAL PHILOSOPHY.

BOSTON:
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Percy | H. C. G.

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NO. 3 WATER STREET.

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THE HERMIT OF WARKWORTH.

PART THE FIRST.

DARK was the night, and wild the storm,
And loud the torrents roar ;
And loud the sea was heard to dash
Against the distant shore.

Musing on man's weak, hapless state,
The lonely hermit lay ;
When, lo ! he heard a female voice
Lament in sore dismay.

With hospitable haste he rose,
And wak'd his sleeping fire ;
And snatching ~~up~~ a lighted brand,
Forth ~~brought~~ the rev'rend sire.

All sad beneath a neighboring tree
A beauteous maid he found,
Who beat her breast, and with her tears
Bedew'd the mossy ground.

“O weep not, lady, weep not so ;
Nor let vain fears alarm ;
My little cell shall shelter thee,
And keep thee safe from harm.”

“It is not for myself I weep
Nor for myself I fear ;
But for my dear and only friend,
Who lately left me here :

“And while some sheltering bower he sought
Within this lonely wood,
Ah ! sore I fear his wandering feet
Have slipt in yonder flood.”

“O ! trust in heaven,” the Hermit said,
“And to my cell repair ;
Doubt not but I shall find thy friend,
And ease thee of thy care.”

Then climbing up his rocky stairs,
He scales the cliff so high ;
And calls aloud, and waves his light
To guide the stranger’s eye.

Among the thickets long he winds,
With careful steps and slow :
At length a voice return’d his call,
Quick answering from below :

" O tell me, father, tell me true,
If you have chanc'd to see
A gentle maid, I lately left
Beneath some neighboring tree :

" But either I have lost the place,
Or she hath gone astray :
And much I fear this fatal stream
Hath snatch'd her hence away."

" Praise Heaven, my son," the Hermit said :
" The lady's safe and well :"
And soon he join'd the wandering youth,
And brought him to his cell.

Then well was seen, these gentle friends,
They lov'd each other dear :
The youth he press'd her to his heart ;
The maid let fall a tear.

Ah ! seldom had their host, I ween,
Beheld so sweet a pair :
The youth was tall with manly bloom ;
She, slender, soft, and fair.

The youth was clad in forest green,
With bugle-horn so bright :
She in a silken robe and scarf,
Snatch'd up in hasty flight.

“ Sit down, my children,” says the sage,

“ Sweet rest your limbs require :”

Then heaps fresh fuel on the hearth,

And mends his little fire.

“ Partake,” he said, “ my simple store,

Dried fruits, and milk, and curds ;”

And spreading all upon the board,

Invites with kindly words.

“ Thanks, father, for thy bounteous fare,”

The youthful couple say :

Then freely ate, and made good cheer,

And talk’d their cares away.

“ Now say, my children, (for perchance

My counsel may avail,)

What strange adventure brought you here

Within this lonely dale ?”

“ First tell me, father,” said the youth,

“ (Nor blame mine eager tongue,)

What town is near ? What lands are these ?

And to what lord belong ?”

“ Alas ! my son,” the Hermit said,

“ Why do I live to say,

The rightful lord of these domains

Is banish’d far away ?

“ Ten winters now have shed their snows
On this my lowly hall,
Since valiant Hotspur (so the North
Our youthful lord did call)

“ Against Fourth Henry Bolingbroke
Led up his northern powers,
And, stoutly fighting, lost his life
Near proud Salopia’s towers.

“ One son he left, a lovely boy,
His country’s hope and heir ;
And, oh ! to save him from his foes
It was his grandsire’s care.

“ In Scotland safe he plac’d the child
Beyond the reach of strife,
Nor long before the brave old Earl
At Braham lost his life.

“ And now the Percy name, so long
Our northern pride and boast,
Lies hid alas ! beneath a cloud ;
Their honors rest and lost.

“ No chieftain of that noble house
Now leads our youth to arms ;
The bordering Scots despoil our fields,
And ravage all our farms.

" Their halls and castles, once so fair,
Now moulder in decay ;
Proud strangers now usurp their lands,
And bear their wealth away.

" Nor far from hence, where yon full stream
Runs winding down the lea,
Fair Warkworth lifts her lofty towers,
And overlooks the sea.

" Those towers, alas ! now lie forlorn,
With noisome weeds o'erspread,
Where feasted lords and courtly dames,
And where the poor were fed.

" Meantime far off, 'mid Scottish hills,
The Percy lives unknown ;
On strangers' bounty he depends,
And may not claim his own.

" O might I with these aged eyes,
But live to see him here,
Then should my soul depart in bliss!"—
He said, and dropt a tear.

" And is the Percy still so lov'd
Of all his friends and thee ?
Then, bless me, father," said the youth,
" For I, thy guest, am he."

Silent he gaz'd, then turn'd aside
To wipe the tears he shed ;
And lifting up his hands and eyes,
Pour'd blessings on his head :

“ Welcome, our dear and much lov'd lord,
Thy country's hope and care :
But who may this young lady be,
That is so wondrous fair ? ”

“ Now, father ! listen to my tale,
And thou shalt know the truth :
And let thy sage advice direct
My inexperienc'd youth.

“ In Scotland I've been nobly bred
Beneath the Regent's¹ hand,
In feats of arms, and every lore
To fit me for command.

“ With fond impatience long I burn'd
My native land to see :
At length I won my guardian friend
To yield that boon to me.

“ Then up and down in hunter's garb
I wander'd as in chase,
Till in the noble Neville's² house
I gain'd a hunter's place.

14 THE HERMIT OF WARKWORTH.

“ Some time with him I liv’d unknown,
Till I’d the hap so rare
To please this young and gentle dame,
That Baron’s daughter fair.”

“ Now, Percy,” said the blushing maid,
“ The truth I must reveal ;
Souls great and generous, like to thine,
Their noble deeds conceal.

“ It happen’d on a summer’s day,
Led by the fragrant breeze,
I wander’d forth to take the air
Among the green-wood trees.

“ Sudden a band of rugged Scots,
That near in ambush lay,
Moss-troopers from the border-side,
There seiz’d me for their prey.

“ My shrieks had all been spent in vain ;
But Heaven, that saw my grief,
Brought this brave youth within my call,
Who flew to my relief.

“ With nothing but his hunting spear,
And dagger in his hand,
He sprung like lightning on my foes,
And caus’d them soon to stand.

“ He fought till more assistance came :
The Scots were overthrown ;
Thus freed me, captive, from their bands,
To make me more his own.”

“ O happy day !” the youth replied :
“ Blest were the wounds I bear !
From that fond hour she deign’d to smile,
And listen to my prayer.

“ And when she knew my name and birth,
She vow’d to be my bride ;
But oh ! we fear’d (alas, the while !)
Her princely mother’s pride :

“ Sister of haughty Bolingbroke,³
Our house’s ancient foe,
To me, I thought, a banish’d wight,
Could ne’er such favor show.

“ Despairing then to gain consent,
At length to fly with me
I won this lovely, timorous maid ;
To Scotland bound are we.

“ This evening, as the night drew on,
Fearing we were pursued,
We turn’d adown the right-hand path,
And gain’d this lonely wood :

“O weep not, lady, weep not so ;
Nor let vain fears alarm ;
My little cell shall shelter thee,
And keep thee safe from harm.”

“It is not for myself I weep
Nor for myself I fear ;
But for my dear and only friend,
Who lately left me here :

“And while some sheltering bower he sought
Within this lonely wood,
Ah ! sore I fear his wandering feet
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Beneath some neighboring tree :

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Or she hath gone astray :
And much I fear this fatal stream
Hath snatch’d her hence away.”

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They lov’d each other dear :
The youth he press’d her to his heart ;
The maid let fall a tear.

Ah ! seldom had their host, I ween,
Beheld so sweet a pair :
The youth was tall with manly bloom ;
She, slender, soft, and fair.

The youth was clad in forest green,
With bugle-horn so bright :
She in a silken robe and scarf,
Snatch’d up in hasty flight.

“ ‘Tis Father Bernard, so rever’d
For every worthy deed ;
To Raby Castle he shall go,
And for us kindly plead.

“ To fetch this good and holy man
Our reverend host is gone ;
And soon, I trust, his pious hands
Will join us both in one.”

Thus they in sweet and tender talk
The lingering hours beguile :
At length they see the hoary sage
Come from the neighboring isle.

With pious joy and wonder mix’d
He greets the noble pair,
And glad consents to join their hands
With many a fervent prayer.

Then strait to Raby’s distant walls
He kindly wends his way :
Meantime in love and dalliance sweet
They spend the livelong day.

And now, attended by their host,
The Hermitage they view’d,
Deep-hewn within a craggy cliff,
And overhung with wood.

And near a flight of shapeless steps,
All cut with nicest skill,
And piercing through a stony arch,
Ran winding up the hill :

There deck'd with many a flower and herb
His little garden stands ;
With fruitful trees in shady rows,
All planted by his hands.

Then, scooped within the solid rock,
Three sacred vaults he shows :
The chief, a chapel, neatly arch'd,
On branching columns rose.

Each proper ornament was there,
That should a chapel grace ;
The lattice for confession framed,
And holy water vase.

O'er either door a sacred text
Invites to godly fear ;
And in a little scutcheon hung
The cross, and crown, and spear.

Up to the altar's ample breadth
Two easy steps ascend ;
And near, a glimmering, solemn light
Two well-wrought windows lend.

Beside the altar rose a tomb
All in the living stone ;
On which a young and beauteous maid
In goodly sculpture shone.

A kneeling angel, fairly carv'd,
Lean'd hovering o'er her breast ;
A weeping warrior at her feet ;
And near to these her crest.⁶

The clift, the vault, but chief the tomb,
Attract the wondering pair :
Eager they ask, " What hapless dame
Lies sculptur'd here so fair ?"

The Hermit sigh'd, the Hermit wept,
For sorrow scarce could speak :
At length he wip'd the trickling tears ,
That all bedew'd his cheek.

" Alas ! my children, human life
Is but a vale of woe ;
And very mournful is the tale
Which ye so fain would know !"

THE HERMIT'S TALE.

Young lord, thy grandsire had a friend
In days of youthful fame ;
Yon distant hills were his domains,
Sir Bertram was his name.

Where'er the noble Percy fought,
His friend was at his side ;
And many a skirmish with the Scots
Their early valor tried.

Young Bertram loved a beauteous maid,
As fair as fair might be ;
The dew-drop on the lily's cheek
Was not so fair as she.

Fair Widdrington the maiden's name,
Yon towers her dwelling-place ;⁷
Her sire an old Northumbrian chief,
Devoted to thy race.

Many a lord, and many a knight,
To this fair damsel came ;
But Bertram was her only choice ;
For him she felt a flame.

Lord Percy pleaded for his friend,
Her father soon consents ;
None but the beauteous maid herself
His wishes now prevents.

But she, with studied fond delays,
Defers the blissful hour ;
And loves to try his constancy,
And prove her maiden power.

“ That heart,” she said, “ is lightly priz’d,
Which is too lightly won ;
And long shall rue that easy maid
Who yields her love too soon.”

Lord Percy made a solemn feast
In Alnwick’s princely hall ;
And there came lords, and there came knights,
His chiefs and barons all.

With wassail, mirth, and revelry,
The castle rang around :
Lord Percy call’d for song and harp,
And pipes of martial sound.

The minstrels of thy noble house,
All clad in robes of blue,
With silver crescents on their arms,
Attend in order due.

And high heroic acts they tell,
Their perils past recall :
When, lo ! a damsel young and fair
Stepp'd forward through the hall.

She Bertram courteously address'd ;
And, kneeling on her knee,—
“ Sir knight, the lady of thy love
Hath sent this gift to thee.”

Then forth she drew a glittering helm,
Well plaited many a fold ;
The casque was wrought of temper'd steel,
The crest of burnish'd gold.

“ Sir knight, thy lady sends thee this,
And yields to be thy bride,
When thou hast prov'd this maiden gift
Where sharpest blows are tried.”

Young Bertram took the shining helm,
And thrice he kiss'd the same :
“ Trust me, I'll prove this precious casque
With deeds of noblest fame.”

Lord Percy, and his barons bold,
Then fix upon a day
To scour the marches, late opprest,
And Scottish wrongs repay.

The knights assembled on the hills
A thousand horse or more :
Brave Widdrington, though sunk in years,
The Percy standard bore.

Tweed's limpid current soon they pass,
And range the borders round :
Down the green slopes of Tiviotdale
Their bugle-horns resound.

As when a lion in his den
Hath heard the hunters' cries,
And rushes forth to meet his foes ;
So did the Douglas rise.

Attendant on their chief's command
A thousand warriors wait :
And now the fatal hour drew on
Of cruel keen debate.

A chosen troop of Scottish youths
Advance before the rest ;
Lord Percy mark'd their gallant mien,
And thus his friend address'd :

“ Now, Bertram, prove thy lady's helm,
Attack yon forward band ;
Dead or alive I'll rescue thee,
Or perish by their hand.”

Young Bertram bow'd, with glad assent,
And spurr'd his eager steed,
And calling on his lady's name,
Rush'd forth with whirlwind speed.

As when a grove of sapling oaks
The livid lightning rends ;
So fiercely 'mid the opposing ranks
Sir Bertram's sword descends.

This way and that he drives the steel,
And keenly pierces through ;
And many a tall and comely knight
With furious force he slew.

Now closing fast on every side,
They hem Sir Bertram round :
But dauntless he repels their rage,
And deals forth many a wound.

The vigor of his single arm
Had well nigh won the field ;
When ponderous fell a Scottish axe,
And clave his lifted shield.

Another blow his temples took,
And reft his helm in twain ;
That beauteous helm, his lady's gift !
— His blood bedew'd the plain.

Lord Percy saw his champion fall
Amid th' unequal fight ;
" And now, my noble friends," he said,
" Let's save this gallant knight."

Then rushing in, with stretch'd-out shield
He o'er the warrior hung,
As some fierce eagle spreads her wing
To guard her callow young.

Three times they strove to seize their prey,
Three times they quick retire :
What force could stand his furious strokes,
Or meet his martial fire ?

Now gathering round on every part
The battle rag'd amain ;
And many a lady wept her lord,
That hour untimely slain.

Percy and Douglas, great in arms,
There all their courage show'd ;
And all the field was strew'd with dead,
And all with crimson flow'd.

At length the glory of the day
The Scots reluctant yield,
And, after wondrous valor shown,
They slowly quit the field.

All pale, extended on their shields,
And weltering in his gore,
Lord Percy's knights their bleeding friend
To Wark's fair castle bore.⁸

“ Well hast thou earned my daughter's love,”
Her father kindly said ;
“ And she herself shall dress thy wounds,
And tend thee in thy bed.”

A message went ; no daughter came,
Fair Isabel ne'er appears ;
“ Beshrew me,” said the aged chief,
“ Young maidens have their fears.

“ Cheer up, my son, thou shalt her see,
So soon as thou canst ride ;
And she shall nurse thee in her bower,
And she shall be thy bride.”

Sir Bertram at her name reviv'd,
He bless'd the soothing sound ;
Fond hope supplied the nurse's care,
And heal'd his ghastly wound.

PART THE THIRD.

ONE early morn, while dewy drops
Hung trembling on the tree,
Sir Bertram from his sick-bed rose ;
His bride he would go see.

A brother he had in prime of youth,
Of courage firm and keen ;
And he would 'tend him on the way,
Because his wounds were green.

All day o'er moss and moor they rode,
By many a lonely tower ;
And 'twas the dew-fall of the night
Ere they drew near her bower.

Most drear and dark the castle seem'd
That wont to shine so bright ;
And long and loud Sir Bertram call'd
Ere he beheld a light.

At length her aged nurse arose,
With voice so shrill and clear,—
“ What wight is this, that calls so loud,
And knocks so boldly here ?”

“ ‘Tis Bertram calls, thy lady’s love,
Come from his bed of care :
All day I’ve ridden o’er moor and moss
To see thy lady fair.”

“ Now out, alas !” she loudly shriek’d ;
“ Alas ! how may this be ?
For six long days are gone and past
Since she set out to thee.”

Sad terror seized Sir Bertram’s heart,
And ready was he to fall ;
When now the drawbridge was let down,
And gates were opened all.

“ Six days, young knight, are past and gone,
Since she set out to thee ;
And sure, if no sad harm had happ’d,
Long since they would’st her see.

“ For when she heard thy grievous chance,
She tore her hair, and cried,
‘ Alas ! I’ve slain the comeliest knight,
All through my folly and pride !

“ And now to atone for my sad fault,
And his dear health regain,
I’ll go myself, and nurse my love,
And soothe his bed of pain.’

“ Then mounted she her milk-white steed
One morn at break of day ;
And two tall yeomen went with her,
To guard her on the way.”

Sad terror smote Sir Bertram’s heart,
And grief o’erwhelm’d his mind :
“ Trust me,” said he, “ I ne’er will rest
Till I thy lady find.”

That night he spent in sorrow and care,
And with sad boding heart
Or ever the dawning of the day
His brother and he depart.

“ Now, brother, we’ll our ways divide,
O’er Scottish hills to range ;
Do thou go north, and I’ll go west ;
And all our dress we’ll change.

“ Some Scottish carle hath seiz’d my love,
And borne her to his den ;
And ne’er will I tread English ground
Till she’s restor’d again.”

The brothers straight their paths divide,
O’er Scottish hills to range ;
And hide themselves in quaint disguise,
And oft their dress they change.

Sir Bertram, clad in gown of grey,
Most like a palmer poor,
To halls and castles wanders round,
And begs from door to door.

Sometimes a minstrel's garb he wears,
With pipe so sweet and shrill ;
And wends to every tower and town,
O'er every dale and hill.

One day as he sat under a thorn,
All sunk in deep despair,
An aged pilgrim pass'd him by,
Who mark'd his face of care.

“ All minstrels yet that e'er I saw
Are full of game and glee ;
But thou art sad and woe-begone !
I marvel whence it be ! ”

“ Father, I serve an aged lord,
Whose grief afflicts my mind ;
His only child is stolen away,
And fain I would her find.”

“ Cheer up, my son ; perchance,” he said,
“ Some tidings I may bear :
For oft when human hopes have failed,
Then heavenly comfort's near.

“ Behind yon hills so steep and high,
Down in a lowly glen,
There stands a castle fair and strong,
Far from the abode of men.

“ As late I chanc'd to crave an alms,
About this evening hour,
Methought I heard a lady's voice
Lamenting in the tower.

“ And when I ask'd what harm had happ'd,
What lady sick there lay ?
They rudely drove me from the gate,
And bade me wend away.”

These tidings caught Sir Bertram's ear,
He thank'd him for his tale ;
And soon he hasted o'er the hills,
And soon he reach'd the vale.

Then drawing near those lonely towers,
Which stood in dale so low,
And sitting down beside the gate,
His pipes he 'gan to blow.

“ Sir Porter, is thy lord at home,
To hear a minstrel's song ;
Or may I crave a lodging here,
Without offence or wrong ?”

" My lord," he said, " is not at home,
 To hear a minstrel's song ;
 And, should I lend thee lodging here,
 My life would not be long."

He play'd again so soft a strain,
 Such power sweet sounds impart,
 He won the churlish porter's ear,
 And mov'd his stubborn heart.

" Minstrel," he said, " thou play'st so sweet,
 Fair entrance thou should'st win,
 But, alas ! I'm sworn upon the rood
 To let no stranger in.

" Yet, minstrel, in yon rising cliff
 Thou'l find a sheltering cave ;
 And here thou shalt my supper share,
 And there thy lodging have."

All day he sits beside the gate,
 And pipes both loud and clear :
 All night he watches round the walls,
 In hopes his love to hear.

The first night, as he silent watch'd
 All at the midnight hour,
 He plainly heard his lady's voice
 Lamenting in the tower.

The second night, the moon shone clear,
And gilt the spangled dew;
He saw his lady through the grate,
But 'twas a transient view.

The third night, wearied out, he slept
Till near the morning tide;
When, starting up, he seiz'd his sword,
And to the castle hied.

When, lo ! he saw a ladder of ropes
Depending from the wall ;
And o'er the moat was newly laid
A poplar strong and tall.

And soon he saw his love descend,
Wrapt in a tartan plaid,
Assisted by a sturdy youth,
In Highland garb y-clad.

Amaz'd, confounded at the sight,
He lay unseen and still ;
And soon he saw them cross the stream,
And mount the neighboring hill.

Unheard, unknown of all within,
The youthful couple fly ;
But what can 'scape the lover's ken,
Or shun his piercing eye ?

With silent step he follows close
Behind the flying pair,
And saw her hang upon his arm
With fond familiar air.

“Thanks, gentle youth,” she often said;
“My thanks thou well hast won:
For me what wiles hast thou contriv’d!
For me what dangers run!

“And ever shall my grateful heart
Thy services repay:”—
Sir Bertram would no further hear,
But cried, “Vile traitor, stay!

“Vile traitor! yield that lady up!”
And quick his sword he drew;
The stranger turn’d in sudden rage,
And at Sir Bertram flew.

With mortal hate their vigorous arms
Gave many a vengeful blow;
But Bertram’s stronger hand prevail’d,
And laid the stranger low.

“Die, traitor, die!”—A deadly thrust
Attends each furious word.
Ah! then fair Isabel knew his voice,
And rush’d beneath his sword.

“ O stop,” she cried, “ O stop thy arm !
Thou dost thy brother slay ! ”—
And here the hermit paus’d, and wept—
His tongue no more could say.

At length he cried, “ Ye lovely pair,
How shall I tell the rest ?
Ere I could stop my piercing sword,
It fell, and stabb’d her breast ! ”

“ Wert thou thyself that hapless youth ?
Ah ! cruel fate ! ” they said.
The Hermit wept, and so did they :
They sigh’d ; he hung his head.

“ O blind and jealous rage,” he cried,
“ What evils from thee flow ! ”
The Hermit paus’d ; they silent mourn’d :
He wept, and they were woe.

Ah, when I heard my brother’s name,
And saw my lady bleed,
I rav’d, I wept, I curst my arm
That wrought the fatal deed.

In vain I clasp’d her to my breast,
And clos’d the ghastly wound ;
In vain I press’d his bleeding corpse,
And rais’d it from the ground.

My brother, alas ! spake never more,
His precious life was flown :
She kindly strove to soothe my pain,
Regardless of her own.

“ Bertram,” she said, “ be comforted,
And live to think on me :
May we in heaven that union prove,
Which here was not to be !

“ Bertram,” she said, “ I still was true :
Thou only hadst my heart :
May we hereafter meet in bliss !
We now, alas ! must part.

“ For thee I left my father’s hall,
And flew to thy relief,
When, lo ! near Cheviot’s fatal hills
I met a Scottish chief,

“ Lord Malcolm’s son, whose proffer’d love
I had refus’d with scorn ;
He slew my guards, and seiz’d on me
Upon that fatal morn ;

“ And in these dreary hated walls
He kept me close confin’d ;
And fondly sued, and warmly press’d,
To win me to his mind.

“ Each rising morn increas’d my pain,
Each night increas’d my fear !
When, wandering in this northern garb,
Thy brother found me here.

“ He quickly form’d the brave design
To set me, captive, free ;
And on the moor his horses wait,
Tied to a neighboring tree.

“ Then haste, my love, escape away,
And for thyself provide ;
And sometimes fondly think on her
Who should have been thy bride.”

Thus, pouring comfort on my soul,
Even with her latest breath,
She gave one parting, fond embrace,
And clos’d her eyes in death.

And soon those honor’d, dear remains
To England were convey’d ;
And there within their silent tombs,
With holy rites, were laid.

For me, I loath’d my wretched life,
And long to end it thought ;
Till time, and books, and holy men,
Had better counsels taught.

They rais'd my heart to that pure source
Whence heavenly comfort flows :
They taught me to despise the world,
And calmly bear its woes.

No more the slave of human pride,
Vain hope, and sordid care,
I meekly vow'd to spend my life
In penitence and prayer.

The bold Sir Bertram, now no more
Impetuous, haughty, wild ;
But poor and humble Benedict,
Now lowly, patient, mild.

My lands I gave to feed the poor,
And sacred altars raise ;
And here, a lonely anchorite,
I come to end my days.

This sweet sequester'd vale I chose,
These rocks, and hanging grove ;
For oft beside that murmuring stream
My love was wont to rove.

My noble friend approv'd my choice ;
This blest retreat he gave :
And here I carv'd her beauteous form,
And scoop'd this holy cave.

Full fifty winters, all forlorn,
My life I've linger'd here ;
And daily o'er this sculptur'd saint
I drop the pensive tear.

And thou, dear brother of my heart
So faithful and so true,
The sad remembrance of thy fate
Still makes my bosom rue !

Yet not unpitied pass'd my life,
Forsaken or forgot,
The Percy and his noble sons
Would grace my lowly cot ;

Oft the great Earl, from toils of state
And cumbrous pomp of power,
Would gladly seek my little cell,
To spend the tranquil hour.

But length of life is length of woe !
I liv'd to mourn his fall :
I liv'd to mourn his godlike sons
And friends and followers all.

But thou the honors of thy race,
Lov'd youth, shalt now restore ;
And raise again the Percy name
More glorious than before.

He ceas'd ; and on the lovely pair
His choicest blessings laid :
While they, with thanks and pitying tears,
His mournful tale repaid.

And now what present course to take
They ask the good old sire ;
And, guided by his sage advice,
To Scotland they retire.

Meantime their suit such favor found
At Raby's stately hall,
Earl Neville and his princely spouse
Now gladly pardon all.

She, suppliant, at her nephew's⁹ throne
The royal grace implor'd :
To all the honors of his race
The Percy was restor'd.

The youthful Earl still more and more
Admir'd his beauteous dame :
Nine noble sons to him she bore,
All worthy of their name.

NOTES

TO

THE HERMIT OF WARKWORTH.

(1) Robert Stuart, Duke of Albany.

(2) Ralph Neville, first Earl of Westmoreland, who chiefly resided at his two castles of Brancepeth, and Raby, both in the Bishopric of Durham.

(3) Joan, Countess of Westmoreland, mother of the young lady, was daughter of John of Gaunt, and half-sister of King Henry IV.

(4) Adjoining to the cliff which contains the Chapel of the Hermitage, are the remains of a small building, in which the Hermit dwelt. This consisted of one lower apartment, with a little bedchamber over it, and is now in ruins; whereas the Chapel, cut in the solid rock, is still very entire and perfect.

(5) In the little island of Coquet, near Warkworth, are still seen the ruins of a cell, which belonged to the Benedictine monks of Tinemouth-Abbey.

(6) This is a Bull's Head, the crest of the Widdrington family. All the figures, &c. here described are still visible, only somewhat effaced with length of time.

(7) Widdrington Castle is about five miles south of Warkworth.

(8) Wark Castle, a fortress belonging to the English, and of great note in ancient times, stood on the southern banks of the river Tweed, a little to the east of Tividale, and not far from Kelso. It is now entirely destroyed.

(9) King Henry V. Anno 1414.

THE TWO CAPTAINS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'UNDINE,' ETC.

CHAPTER I.

A MILD summer evening rested on the seashore near the city of Malaga, awakening the guitar of many a cheerful singer, as well from the ships in the harbor, as from the houses in the city and the ornamental garden-dwellings around. These melodious tones emulated the voices of the birds as they greeted the refreshing breezes, and floated from the meadows over this enchanting region.

Some troops of infantry were on the strand, and purposed to pass the night there, that they might be ready to embark at the earliest dawn of morning. This pleasant evening made them forget that they ought to devote to sleep their last hours on European ground; they began to sing war-songs, and to drink long life to the mighty emperor Charles V., now beleaguering the pirate-nest of Tunis, and to whose assistance they were about to sail.

These happy soldiers were not all of one race. Only two banners waved for Spain; the third bore the German colors; and the difference of manners and speech had often previously given rise to much bantering. Now, however, thoughts of the approaching voyage,

and the dangers they would share together, as well the enjoyment which this lovely southern evening poured through soul and sense, united the comrades full and undisturbed concord. The Germans tried speak Spanish, and the Spaniards German ; without occurring to any one to remark the blunders and mistakes that were made. Each helped the other ; thin ing only how best to gain the good will of his companion by means of his own language.

Apart from this noisy group, a young German captain, Sir Heimbert of Waldhausen, was reclining under a cork-tree, and looking up to the stars with a steadfast and solemn gaze, very different from the frank, social spirit which his comrades knew and loved in him so well. A Spanish captain, named Don Frederigo Men dez, approached him. He was as young, and as much accustomed to martial exercises ; but his disposition was as reserved and thoughtful as Heimbert's was gentle and frank. "Pardon me, señor," began the solemn Spaniard, "if I disturb your meditations ; but I have so often known you as a courageous warrior and faithful companion in arms, in the many hot fights in which I have had the honor to see you, that I would choose you before all others for a knightly service, if it will not interfere with your own plans and projects for this evening."

"Dear sir," frankly returned Heimbert ; "I have an affair of importance to transact before sunrise ; but till midnight I am right willing and ready to render you any service as a brother in arms."

"Enough," said Frederigo ; "for before midnight must the tones have long ceased, in which I take leave

of the dearest creature I have known in my native city. But, that you may understand the whole affair, as my noble companion should, listen to me attentively for a few moments :—

“ Some time before I left Malaga, to join our great emperor’s army, and to assist in spreading the glory of his arms in Italy, I served, after the manner of young knights, a damsel of this city, the beautiful Lucilla. She stood hardly on the border that divides childhood from growing womanhood ; and as I, then a mere boy, offered my homage with friendly, childlike mind, so my young mistress in similar guise received it.

“ At last I went to Italy, as you very well know, who were my companion in many a hot fight, as well as in many a magic and tempting scene in that luxurious land. Through all our changes I held the image of my gentle mistress steadfastly, and never once relinquished the service and faith I had vowed to her ; though I will not conceal from you, that it was more to fulfill the word I had pledged at my departure than from any immoderate glowing feeling of my heart. When we returned to my native city, a few weeks since, I found my lady married to one of the richest and most distinguished knights of Malaga. Fiercer far than love, jealousy (that almost almighty child of heaven and hell) now spurred me on to follow Lucilla’s steps. From her dwelling to the church—from thence to the houses of her friends, and, again to her home ; and even, as far as possible, into the circle of knights and ladies which surrounds her, I unweariedly pursued her. I thus assured myself that no other young knight attended her, and that she had entirely devoted herself

to the husband her parents had selected for her, although he was not the one of her heart's choice. This so fully contented me, that I should not have had occasion to trouble you at this moment, if Lucilla had not approached me the other day, and whispered in my ear, that I should not provoke her husband, for he was very passionate and bold; to herself it threatened no danger—not the least—because he loved and honored her above all things; but upon that very account would his anger fall more fearfully upon me. You can now easily understand, my noble comrade, that to preserve my character for contempt of danger I must now pursue Lucilla's steps more closely than ever, and sing nightly serenades beneath her flowery window till the morning star makes its mirror in the sea. At midnight, Lucilla's husband sets out for Madrid, and after that hour I will carefully avoid the street in which she dwells; but until then, as soon as the evening is sufficiently advanced, I will not cease to sing love-romances before his house. I have learnt that not only he, but also Lucilla's brothers have engaged in the quarrel; and it is this, señor, which makes me request for a short time the assistance of your good sword."

Heimbert warmly seized the Spaniard's hand, and said, "To shew you, dear sir, how willingly I undertake what you wish, I will meet your confidence with like frankness, and relate a pleasant incident which happened to me in this city, and beg you, after midnight, to render me a little service. My story is short, and will not detain you longer than we must wait for the twilight to become deep enough to begin your serenade.

"The day after we arrived here, I was amusing myself in one of the beautiful gardens which surround us. I have now been long in these southern lands, but I believe the dreams which every night carry me back to my German home are the cause of my finding every thing about me here so strange and astonishing still. At all events, when I wake each morning I wonder anew, as if I was just arrived. I was then wandering among the aloes, and under the laurel and oleander trees, as one bewildered. Suddenly I heard a cry near me, and a young lady, dressed in white, flew into my arms and fainted away, while her companions separated in every direction. A soldier has always his senses about him, and I soon perceived a furious bull pursuing the beautiful damsel. Quickly I threw her over a flowery hedge, and sprang after myself, whilst the beast, blind with rage, passed us by; and I could afterwards hear no more of it, than that it had escaped from a neighboring court-yard, where some youths were trying to commence a bull-fight, and had broken furiously into this garden.

"I was now alone with the senseless lady in my arms; and she was so wondrously beautiful that I have never in my whole life felt happier or sadder than at that moment. I laid her upon the grass, and sprinkled her angel-brow with water from a fountain near us. At last she came to herself, and as she opened her lovely eyes, I thought I now knew how the blessed spirits look in heaven.

"She thanked me with grateful and courteous words, and called me her knight. But I was so enchanted, I could not utter a word; and she must almost have

thought me dumb. At length my speech returned; and I ventured to breathe a request—which came from my heart—that the lovely lady would often give me the happiness of seeing her in this garden, for the few weeks I should remain here, till the service of the emperor should drive me forth to the burning sands of Africa. She looked at me, half smiling, half sadly, and murmured, ‘Yes.’ And she has kept her word, and appeared there daily, without our having yet ventured to speak to one another. For though we were sometimes quite alone, I could not do more than enjoy the happiness of walking by her side. Often she has sung to me; and I have answered her in song. When I yesterday informed her that our departure was so near, I fancied there was a tear in her heavenly eye; and I must have looked very sorrowful also, for she said, consolingly, ‘Ah, pious, childlike warrior! one may confide in you as in an angel. After midnight, before the twilight summons you to embark, I give you leave to say farewell to me it this place. If you could find a faithful friend, whose silence you could depend on, to watch the entrance from the street, it might be as well; for many soldiers will be at that time returning from their last carouse in the city.’ Now God has sent me such a friend; and I shall go joyfully to the lovely maiden.”

“I wish the service you require had more danger,” answered Frederigo, “that I might better prove to you how faithfully I would serve you with life and limb. But come, noble brother! the hour of my adventure is arrived.”

Frederigo took a guitar under his arm; and wrap-

ping themselves in their mantles, the young captains hastily made their way to the city.

The night-violets before Lucilla's window were pouring forth their sweet perfume, when Frederigo, leaning in the angle of an old wide shadowing church opposite, began to tune his guitar. Heimbert placed himself behind a pillar, his drawn sword under his mantle, and his clear blue eyes, like two watching stars, quietly penetrating around.

Frederigo sang :—

“ Fair in the spring-bright meadows grew
A little flower in May,
And rosy-tinted petals threw
A blush upon its snowy hue,
Beneath the sunny ray.

To me, a youth, that little flower
My soul's delight became ;
And often then, in happy hour,
I taught my tongue with courteous power
Some flattering lay to frame.

But ah ! from where the floweret stood
In delicate array,
Was I to distant scenes of blood,
To foreign lands, o'er field and flood,
Soon summoned far away.

And now I am returned again,
I seek my lovely flower ;
But all my hopeful search is vain ;
Transplanted from its grassy plain,
My flower is free no more.

A gardener has the treasure found,
 And claimed it for his prize :
 Now cherished in a guarded boud',
 And hedged with golden lattice round,
 She is denied mine eyes.

His lattice he may freely twine,
 His jealous bars I grant :
 But *all* I need not yet resign ;
 For still this pure delight is mine,
 Her wondrous praise to chant.

And, wandering in the coolness there,
 I'll touch my cithern's string,
 Still celebrate the floweret fair ;
 While e'en the gardener shall not dare
 Forbid my voice to sing."

" That remains to be proved, *señor*," said a man, stepping close, and, as he thought, unobserved, to Frederigo. He had been apprised of the stranger's approach by a signal from his watchful friend, and answered with the greatest coolness : " If you wish to commence a suit with my guitar, *señor*, you will find she has a tongue of steel, which has already on many occasions done her excellent service. With which do you wish to speak ?—with the guitar, or with the advocate ? "

While the stranger hesitated what to reply to this bold speech, Heimbert perceived two mantled figures draw near, and remain standing a few steps from him—one behind the other, so as to cut off Frederigo's flight, if he had intended to escape.

" I believe, dear sirs," said Sir Heimbert, in a friend-

ly manner, "we are here on the same errand : to take care that no one intrudes upon the conference of yonder knights. At least, that is my business. And I can assure you, that any one who attempts to interfere with their affair shall receive my dagger in his heart. You see we shall best fulfill our duty by remaining still." The two gentlemen bowed courteously, and were silent.

So astonishing was the quiet self-possession with which the two soldiers carried on their affair, that their three companions were at a loss to imagine how they would commence their quarrel. At last Frederigo again touched his guitar, and appeared about to begin another song. At this mark of contempt and unconsciousness of danger, Lucilla's husband (for it was he who had taken his stand by Don Frederigo) was so enraged, that he, without further delay, snatched his sword from its sheath, and called out in a voice of suppressed rage : "Draw ! or I shall stab you !"

"Very willingly, señor," answered Frederigo, composedly. "You have no need to threaten me, and might quite as well have spoken quietly." So saying, he laid his guitar in a niche in the church-wall, seized his weapon, and, bowing gracefully to his adversary, the fight began.

For some time the two figures by Heimbert's side, who were Lucilla's brothers, remained quite quiet; but as Frederigo began to get the better of their brother-in-law, they made a movement, as if they would take part in the fight. At this, Heimbert made his good sword gleam in the moon-light, and said : "Dear sirs, you surely would not wish me to put my threat into

execution. Pray do not oblige me to do so; for I cannot be otherwise, doubt not I shall keep my word. The two young men remained from this time quite motionless, surprised at the cheerful, true-hearted friendliness of all Heimbert's words.

Meanwhile had Frederigo, though pressing hard upon his adversary, yet carefully avoided wounding him, and at last, by a dexterous movement, he wrested the weapon from him; so that Lucilla's husband, in surprise and shock of this unexpected advantage, treated a few steps. Frederigo threw the sword in the air, and adroitly catching it near the point as it descended, said, as he offered the ornamented hilt to his opponent: "Take it, señor; and I hope this matter ended; and you now understand that I am only here to shew I fear no danger in the world. The bell tolled twelve from the old dome; and I give you my word honor, as a knight and a soldier, that neither is Don Lucilla pleased with my attentions, nor should I, if I lived a hundred years in Malaga, continue to serenade her. So pursue your journey in peace; and farewell. Then he once more greeted his conquered adversary with solemn, stern courtesy, and withdrew. Heimbert followed him, after he had cordially shaken hand with the two brothers, saying: "Never let it again enter your heads, dear young gentlemen, to interfere in an honorable fight. Do you understand me?"

He soon overtook his companion, and walked by his side in silence—his heart beating with joy, sorrow, and expectation. Don Frederigo Mendez was also silent till Heimbert stopped before a garden-door overhung with fruitful orange-boughs, and pointing to a pomel-

granate-tree laden with fruit, said: "We are at the place, dear comrade." Then the Spaniard appeared about to ask a question; but he checked himself, and merely said: "Understand me: you have my word of honor to protect this entrance for you till the hour of dawn." He began walking to and fro before the gate with drawn sword, like a sentinel; whilst Heimbert, trembling with joy, hastened through the dark groves within.

CHAPTER II.

He had not far to seek the lovely star, which he so deeply felt was the one destined to shed its light over his whole life. The full moon revealed to him the slender form of the lady walking near the entrance. She wept softly, and yet smiled with such composure, that her tears seemed rather to resemble a decoration of pearls than a veil of sorrow.

The lovers wandered silently beside one another through the flowery pathway, half in sorrow, half in joy; while sometimes the night air touched the guitar on the lady's arm so lightly, that a slight murmur blended with the song of the nightingale; or her delicate fingers on the strings awoke a few fleeting chords, and the shooting stars seemed as if they would pursue the retreating tones of the guitar.

O how truly blessed was this hour to the youth and maiden! for now neither rash wishes nor impure desires had any place in their minds. They walked

side by side, satisfied that the good God had granted them this happiness ; and so little desiring any thing farther, that the fleeting and perishable nature of the present floated away in the background of their thoughts. In the midst of this beautiful garden they found a large open lawn, ornamented with statues, and surrounding a fountain. On the edge of this the lovers sat down, alternately fixing their eyes on the water sparkling in the moonlight and on one another. The maiden touched her guitar ; and Heimbert, compelled by some irresistible impulse, sang the following words to it :

“ A sweet, sweet life have I,
But cannot name its charm ;
Oh ! would it teach me consciously,
That so my lips, in calm,
Soft, gentle songs, should ever praise
What my fond spirit endless says.”

He suddenly stopped, and blushed, for he feared he had said too much. The lady blushed also ; and after playing some time, half abstractedly, on the strings, she sang as if still in a dream :—

“ Who beside the youth is singing,
Seated on the tender grass,
Where the moon her light is flinging,
And the sparkling waters pass ?

Shall the maid reveal her name,
When, though still unknown it be,
Glowes her trembling cheek with shame,
And her heart beats anxiously ?

First let the knight be nam'd—'tis he
Who, in his bright array,
With Spaniards stood triumphantly
Upon the glorious day.

Who before Pavia bravely fought,
A boy of sixteen years :
Pride to his country hath he brought,
And to his foemen fears.

Heimbert is his noble name ;
Victor he in many a fight :
Dona Clara feels no shame,
Sitting by so brave a knight.

In her name's soft sound revealing,
Seated on the tender grass,
Where the moonbeams' light is stealing,
And the sparkling waters pass."

"Ah," said Heimbert, blushing more deeply than before,—"oh, Dofia Clara, that affair at Pavia was a very insignificant feat of arms; and if it had deserved a reward, what could better serve as one than the surpassing bliss which I now enjoy? Now I know what your name is, and dare address you by it, you angel bright, Dofia Clara! you blessed and beautiful Dofia Clara! Only tell me who has made so favorable a report of my youthful deeds, that I may ever think of him gratefully."

"Can the noble Heimbert of Waldhausen suppose," replied Clara, "that the warriors of Spain sent no sons where he stood in battle? You have surely seen them near you in the fight; and how, then, can it surprise You that your glories are known here?"

They now heard the silvery tones of a little bell from the neighboring palace, and Clara whispered, "It is time to part : adieu, my hero!" And she smiled on Heimbert through her tears ; and as she bent towards him, he almost fancied he felt a gentle kiss breathed on his lips. When he looked around, Clara had disappeared : the morning clouds began to assume the rosy tint of dawn, and he rejoined his watchful friend at the entrance-door, with a whole heaven of love's proud happiness in his heart.

"Stand ! no further !" exclaimed Frederigo, as Heimbert appeared from the garden, holding, at the same time, his drawn sword towards him.

"Oh, you are mistaken, my good comrade," said the German, laughing,—"it is I whom you see before you,"

"Don't imagine, Sir Heimbert of Waldhausen, that I mistake you," said Frederigo ; "but I have kept my word, and honorably fulfilled my promise to be your guard in this place ; and now I demand of you to draw without further delay, and fight for your life."

"Alas!" sighed Heimbert, "I have often heard that there are witches in these southern lands, who have the power to deprive people of their senses with their magic arts and charms, but till to-day I have never experienced any thing of the sort. Think better of it, my dear comrade, and go with me to the shore."

Frederigo smiled scornfully, and answered, "Leave off your silly nonsense ; and if one must explain every thing to you, word by word, before you understand it, I will tell you that the lady you came to meet in this my garden, Dofia Clara Mendez, is my only and dearest sister. Now lose no further time, and draw, *señor*."

"God forbid!" exclaimed the German, without touching his weapon: "you shall be my brother-in-law, Frederigo, and not my murderer, still less will I be yours."

Frederigo shook his head angrily, and advanced with measured steps towards his companion. Heimbert, however, continued motionless, and said, "No, Frederigo, I can never do *you* any harm; for not only do I love your sister, but you must certainly be the person who has spoken to her so honorably of my battle-deeds in Italy."

"If I did so," answered Frederigo, "I was a fool. But thou, thou weak coward, draw thy sword, or—"

Frederigo had hardly spoken these words, before Heimbert, glowing with indignation, snatched his sword from its sheath, exclaiming, "This the devil himself could not bear!" And now the two young captains fiercely closed upon one another.

This was quite another battle to that which Frederigo had previously fought with Lucilla's husband. The two soldiers well understood their weapons, and boldly strove with one another; the light gleamed from their swords, as first one and then the other made a deadly thrust with the speed of lightning, which his adversary as speedily turned aside. Firmly they planted the left foot, as if rooted in the earth, the right advanced one step to make each onset, and then quickly withdrawn to recover their footing. From the resolution and quiet self-possession with which both combatants fought, it was easy to see that one or other of them must find his grave beneath the orange-trees, whose overhanging boughs were now illuminated by

the glow of morning. This would certainly have been the case, had not the report of a cannon from the harbor reached them.

The combatants stopped as at an understood signal, and silently counted till thirty, when a second gun was heard. "That is the signal for embarkation, *señor*," said Frederigo; "we are now in the emperor's service, and all fighting is unlawful which is not against the foes of Charles the Fifth. We must defer our combat until the termination of the war."

The two captains hastened to the shore, and were engaged in the embarkation of their troops. The sun, rising from the sea, shone at once on the ships and the water.

CHAPTER III.

THE voyagers had for some time to contend with contrary winds; and when, at last the coast of Barbary became visible, the evening closed so deeply over the sea, that no pilot in the little squadron would venture nearer land, and they anchored in the calm sea. They crossed themselves, and anxiously waited for the morning; while the soldiers, full of hope and anticipation of honor, assembled in groups upon the decks, straining their eyes to see the long-desired scene of their glory.

Meanwhile the heavy firing of besiegers and besieged thundered unceasingly from the fortress of Goletta; and as the heavy clouds of night thickened over the shore, the flames of the burning houses in the city became

more visible, and the course of the fiery shots could be distinctly traced as they crossed each other in their path of frightful devastation. It was evident that the Musselmans had sallied forth, for a sharp fire of musketry was suddenly heard amidst the roaring of the cannon. The fight now approached the trenches of the Christians; and from the ships they could hardly see whether the besiegers were in danger or not. At last they perceived that the Turks were driven back into the fortress: thither the Christian host pursued them, and loud shouts of victory were heard from the Spanish camp—Goletta was taken!

The troops on board the ships were composed of young courageous men; and how their hearts glowed and beat high at this glorious spectacle need not be detailed to those who carry a brave heart in their own bosoms; while to any other, all description would be thrown away.

Heimbert and Frederigo stood near one another. "I know not," said the latter, "what it is which tells me that tomorrow I must plant my standard upon yonder height, which is so brightly lighted up by the burning brands in Goletta." "That is just my feeling," said Heimbert. Then the two captains were silent, and turned angrily away.

The wished-for morning at last arose, the ships neared the shore, and the troops landed, while an officer was immediately despatched to apprise the mighty general Alva of the arrival of this reinforcement. The soldiers hastily ranged themselves on the beach, and were soon in battle-order, to await the inspection of their great leader.

Clouds of dust appeared in the gray twilight, and officer, hastening back, announced the approach of general. And because, in the language of Castile, *A* signifies ‘morning,’ the Spaniards raised a shout triumph at the happy omen they perceived in the beams of the rising sun and the head of the general staff becoming visible together.

Alva’s stern pale face soon appeared: he was mounted upon a large Andalusian charger of the deep black, and galloped up and down the lines once; then halting in the middle, looked over the ranks with scrutinizing eye, and said, with evident satisfaction “You pass muster well. ’Tis as it should be. I like to see you in such order, and can perceive that, notwithstanding your youth, you are tried soldiers. We will first hold a review, and then I will lead you something more interesting.”

He dismounted, and, walking to the right wing, began to inspect one troop after another in the close manner, summoning each captain to his side, and exacting from him an account of the most minute particulars. Sometimes a cannon-ball from the fortresses whistled over the heads of the soldiers; and then Alva would stand still, and closely observe their countenances. When he saw that no eye moved, a contented smile spread itself over his solemn face.

When he had thus examined both divisions, he remounted his horse, and again placed himself in the middle. Stroking his long beard, he said, “You are in such good order, soldiers, that you shall take your part in the glorious day which now dawns for our Christian Armada. We will take Barbarossa! Do you hear

the drums and fifes in the camp ? and see him sally forth to meet the emperor ? Yonder is the place for you ! ”

“ *Vivat Carolus Quintus !* ” resounded through the ranks. Alva beckoned the captains to him, and appointed to each his duty. He was used to mingle the German and Spanish troops together, that emulation might increase their courage ; and on the present occasion it happened that Heimbert and Frederigo were commanded to storm the height which, now illumined by the beams of morning, they recognized as the very same that had appeared so inviting the night before.

The cannons roared, and the trumpets sounded, the colors waved proudly in the breeze, and the leaders gave the word “ *March !* ” when the troops rushed on all sides to the battle.

Thrice had Frederigo and Heimbert almost forced their way through a breach in the wall of the fortifications on the height, and thrice were they repulsed by the fierce resistance of the Turks into the valley below. The Musselmans shouted after the retreating foe, clashed their weapons furiously together, and contemptuously laughing, asked whether any one would again venture to give heart and brain to the scimitar, and his body to the rolling stones. The two captains, gnashing their teeth with fury, rearranged their ranks, in order to fill the places of the slain and mortally wounded in these three fruitless attacks. Meanwhile a murmur ran through the Christian host, that a witch fought for the enemy, and helped them to conquer.

At this moment Duke Alva rode up to them ; he looked sharply at the breach they had made. “ Could

you not break through the foe *here?*” said he, shaking his head. “ This surprises me ; for from you two youths and your troops I expected better things.”

“ Do you hear, do you hear *that?* ” cried the captains, pacing through their lines.

The soldiers shouted loudly, and demanded to be led once more against the enemy. Even those mortally wounded exerted their last breath to cry, “ Forward, comrades ! ”

Swift as an arrow had the great Alva leapt from his horse, and, seizing a partisan from the stiff hand of one of the slain, he placed himself before them, and cried, “ I will have part in your glory ! In the name of God and of the Blessed Virgin, forwards, my children ! ”

They rushed joyfully up the hill, all hearts reanimated, and raising their war-cry to heaven, while a few already cried, “ Victoria ! Victoria ! ” and the Musselmans seemed to give way. Then, like the vision of an avenging angel, a maiden, dressed in richly embroidered garments of purple and gold, appeared in the Turkish ranks ; and those who were terrified before, now shouted, “ Allah ! ” and accompanied that name with “ Zelinda, Zelinda ! ” The maiden drew a small box from beneath her arm ; and after opening and breathing into it, threw it among the Christian army. A wild explosion from this destructive engine scattered through the host a whole fire of rockets, grenades, and other fearful messengers of death. The astounded troops held on through the storm. “ On, on ! ” cried Alva ; and “ On ! ” echoed the two captains. But at that moment a flaming bolt fastened on the duke’s high-plumed cap, and burnt and crackled about his

head, so that the general fell fainting down the height. Then the Spanish and German troops were generally routed, and fled hurriedly from the fearful height before the storm. The Musselmans again shouted; and Zelinda's beauty shone over the conquering host like a baleful star.

When Alva opened his eyes, he saw Heimbert standing over him, his clothes, face, and arms scorched by the fire he had with much difficulty extinguished on his commander's head, when a second body of flame rolled down the height in the same manner. The duke was thanking the youth for his preservation, when some soldiers came by, who told him the Saracen power had commenced an attack on the opposite wing of the army. Alva threw himself on the first horse they brought him, and without losing a word, dashed to the place where the threatened danger called him.

Frederigo's glowing eye was fixed on the rampart where the brilliant lady stood, with her snow-white arm extended in the act of hurling a two-edged spear; sometimes encouraging the Musselmans in Arabic, then again speaking scornfully to the Christians in Spanish. Don Frederigo exclaimed, "Oh, foolish lady! she thinks to daunt me, and yet places herself before me,—so tempting, so irresistible a war-prize!"

And as if magic wings had grown from his shoulders, he began to fly up the height with such swiftness, that Alva's storm-flight from thence appeared a lazy snail's pace. Before any one could see how he had gained the height, and wresting spear and shield from the lady, he seized her in his arms, and attempted to bear her away as his prize, while Zelinda clung with both

hands to the palisade in anxious despair. Her cry for help were unavailing; partly because the Turks were stupefied with astonishment to see the magic power of the lady overcome by the almost magic deed of the youth, and partly because the faithful Heimbe immediately on perceiving his companion's enterprise had led both troops to his support, and now stood on his side, fighting hand to hand with the besieged. This time the fury of the Musselmans, overcome as they were by surprise and superstition, availed nothing against the prowess of the Christian soldiers.

The Spaniards and Germans broke through the enemy, assisted by fresh squadrons of their army. The Mohammedans fled with frightful howling; and the banner of the holy German empire, and that of the imperial house of Castile, united by joyful Victoria, waved over the glorious battle-field before the walls of Tunis.

CHAPTER IV.

ZELINDA had escaped from Frederigo's arms in the confusion of the conquerors and conquered, and flew so swiftly through the well-known ground, that though love and desire added wings to his feet, she was soon out of sight. This kindled the fury of the enchanted Spaniard so much the more against the infidel foe. Wherever they collected their scattered force to withstand the progress of the Christians, he hastened with the troops, which ranged themselves around him as

about a victorious banner; while Heimbert was ever at his side like a faithful shield, often warding off from his friend dangers which were unperceived by the infatuated youth.

They learnt that Barbarossa had fled the day before, and pushed onwards with little opposition through the gates of Tunis.

Frederigo's and Heimbert's troops were always together.

Thick clouds of smoke began to roll through the street, and the soldiers had frequently to shake off the sparks and burning fragments which fell upon their coats and richly plumed helmets. "Suppose the enemy has set fire to the powder-magazine in despair!" exclaimed the thoughtful Heimbert. And Frederigo, to whom a word or sign was sufficient, hastened to the spot from whence the smoke proceeded. Their troops pressed closely after them.

A sudden turn in the street brought them upon a magnificent palace, out of whose beautifully ornamented windows the flames were already bursting. Their fitful splendor seemed to make them like death-torches, prepared to do honor to the costly building in the hour of its ruin, as they illuminated first one part and then another of the massy edifice, and then sunk down again into fearful darkness of smoke and vapor.

And like a faultless statue, the crowning glory of the whole, Zelinda stood upon a giddy projection, wreathed around with gleaming tongues of flame, calling upon the faithful to assist her in securing from destruction the wisdom of many centuries, which was laid up in this building. The pinnacle tottered with the effects of the

fire beneath, and a few stones gave way. Freder anxiously cried to the endangered lady; and had she withdrawn her lovely foot, when the wh came crashing down on the pavement. Zelinda dis peared within the burning palace, and Frederigo rush up the marble steps; Heimbert, his ever-faithful frie immediately following.

Their swift feet led them into a vast saloon, wh they saw high arches over their heads, and a labyrinth of chambers opening one into another around the The walls were all ranged with splendid shelves, which were stored rolls of parchment, papyrus, a palm-leaf, inscribed with the long-forgotten characte of past ages, which had now reached the end of the designs; for the flames were creeping in destruktio among them, and stretched their serpent-like heads fro one repository of learning to another; while the Spanis soldiers, who had hoped for plunder, were enraged : finding this mighty building filled only with these parchments, and the more so, because they discerne in them nothing but what appeared to them magica characters.

Frederigo flew, as in a dream, through the strang halls, now half consumed, ever calling Zelinda; no thinking or caring for any thing but his enchanting beauty. Long did Heimbert remain at his side, til they reached a cedar staircase which led to a higher story, where Frederigo listened a moment, and ther said: "She is speaking there aloud! she needs my help!" and sprung up the glowing steps. Heimbert hesitated an instant, for he saw them giving way, and thought to warn his companion; but at that moment

they broke down, and left nothing but a fiery path. Still he could see that Frederigo had clung to an iron grating, over which he soon swung himself. The way was inaccessible to Heimbert: quickly recollecting himself, he lost no time in idly gazing, but hastily sought another flight of stairs in the neighboring halls, which would conduct him to his friend.

Meanwhile Frederigo, following the enchanting voice, had reached a gallery, in the midst of which was a fearful abyss of flames, while the pillars on each side were yet standing. He soon perceived the lovely figure of Zelinda, who clung to a pillar with one hand, while with the other she threatened some Spanish soldiers, who seemed every moment about to seize her, and already had her delicate foot advanced to the edge of the glowing gulf. It was impossible for Frederigo to join her, for the breadth of the separating flames was far too great to spring across. Trembling lest his voice should make the maiden, through either terror or anger, precipitate herself into the abyss, he spoke quite softly over the fiery grave: "Ah, Zelinda! have no such frightful thoughts; your preserver is here!" The maiden bowed her queenly head. And when Frederigo saw her so calm and composed, he cried with all the thunder of a warrior's voice, "Back! you rash plunderers! whoever advances one step nearer to that lady shall feel the weight of my anger!" They started, and appeared willing to retire, till one among them said, "The knight can do us no harm—the gulf is a little too broad for that; and as for the lady's throwing herself in, it is evident that the young knight is her lover; and whoever has a lover is not so inclined to throw

herself away." At this they laughed, and again advanced. Zelinda neared the flaming edge; but Frederigo, with the fury of a lion, had torn his target from his arm, and now flung it across with so sure an aim, that the rash leader fell senseless to the ground. The rest again stood still. "Away with you!" cried Frederigo, authoritatively; "or my dagger shall strike the next as surely; nor will I ever rest till I have found you out, and made you feel the force of my vengeance." The dagger gleamed in the youth's hand, and yet more fearfully gleamed the rage in his eyes. The soldiers fled. Then Zelinda bowed courteously to her preserver; and taking a roll of palm-leaves which lay at her feet, she hastily disappeared at a side-door of the gallery. In vain did Frederigo seek her in the burning palace.

The great Alva held a council with his officers in an open place in the midst of the conquered city, and, by means of an interpreter, questioned the Moorish prisoners what had become of the beautiful enchantress who had been seen encouraging them on the walls, and who, he said, was the most lovely sorceress the world ever saw. Nothing could be gained from the answers; for though all knew her to be a noble lady, well versed in magic lore, none seemed able to tell from whence she had entered Tunis, or whither she had now fled. At last, when they had begun to think their ignorance was the pretence of obstinacy, an old dervish, who had been hitherto unnoticed, pressed forward, and said, with a scornful smile: "Whoever wishes to seek the lady, the way is open for him. I will not conceal what I know of her destination; and I *do* know something. Only

you must first promise me I shall not be compelled to guide any one to her, or my lips shall remain closed for ever; and you may do what you will with me." He looked like one who would keep his word; and Alva, who was pleased with the man's resolute spirit (so akin to his own), gave him the desired assurance. The dervish began his relation.

He was once, he said, wandering in the endless desert of Sahara—perhaps from empty curiosity, and perhaps for a better reason. He lost his way; and at last, when wearied to death, he reached one of those fruit-bearing islands which they call an oasis. Now followed a description of the things he saw there, clothed in all the warmth of oriental imagery; so that the hearts of his hearers sometimes melted within them, and sometimes their hair stood on end at the horrors he related; though, from the strange pronunciation of the speaker, and from his hurried way of speaking, they could hardly understand half he said. The end of all was, that Zelinda dwelt upon this blooming island, surrounded on all sides by the pathless desert, and protected by magic terrors. On her way thither, as the old dervish very well knew, she had left the city half an hour before. The contemptuous words with which he closed his speech shewed plainly that he desired nothing more than that some Christian would undertake the journey, which would inevitably lead him to destruction. At the same time he solemnly affirmed he had uttered nothing but undoubted truth, as a man would do who knows that things are just as he related them. Thoughtful and astonished were the circle of officers around him.

Heimbert had just joined the party, after seeking friend in the burning palace, and collecting and arranging their troops in such a manner as to prevent possibility of any surprise from the robber-hordes. now advanced before Alva, and humbly bowed.

"What wilt thou, my young hero?" said A greeting the young captain in the most friendly manner. "I know your smiling, blooming countenance well. The last time I saw you, you stood like a protecting angel over me. I am so sure that you make no request but what is knightly and honorable that I grant it, whatever it may be."

"My gracious general," said Heimbert, whose cheeks glowed at this praise, "if I may venture to ask a favor it is, that you will give me permission to follow lady Zelinda in the way this strange dervish has pointed out."

The great general bowed assentingly, and added "To a more noble knight could not this honorable adventure be consigned."

"I do not know that," said an angry voice in the crowd; "but this I do know, that to me, above other men, this adventure belongs, as a reward for the capture of Tunis. For who was the first on the heights and in the city?"

"That was Don Frederigo Mendez," said Heimbert taking the speaker by the hand, and leading him before Alva. "In his favor I will willingly resign my reward; for he has done the emperor and the army better service than I have."

"Neither of you shall lose his reward," said Alva

"Each has now permission to seek the maiden in whatever way he thinks best."

Swift as lightning the two young captains escaped from the circle on opposite sides.

CHAPTER V.

LIKE a vast trackless sea, without one object to break the dreary monotony of its horizon, ever white and ever desolate, the great desert of Sahara stretches itself before the eyes of the unhappy wanderer who has lost himself in this frightful region. And, in another way, it resembles the ocean. It throws up waves; and often a burning mist is seen on its surface. Not, indeed, the gentle play of the waves which unite all the coasts of the earth; where each wave, as it rolls onward, brings you a message of love from the far island-kingdom, and carries your answer with it in a love-flowing dance. These waves are only the wild toying of the hot wind with the faithless dust, which always falls back again upon its joyless plain, and never reaches the solid land, where happy men dwell. It is not the lovely cool sea-breeze in which the friendly fays sport themselves, and form their blooming gardens and stately grottos: it is the suffocating vapor rebelliously given back to the glowing sun by the unfruitful sands.

Hither the two captains arrived at the same time, and stood struck with astonishment at the pathless chaos before them. Traces of Zelinda, which were not easily hidden, had hitherto compelled them to

travel almost always together, however displeas Frederigo might be, and whatever angry glances cast upon his unwelcome companion. Each had hop to overtake Zelinda before she reached the desert, w knowing how almost impossible it would be to find h if she had once entered it. And now they had fail in this, and could obtain no further information fro the few Arabs they met, than that there existed a tr dition that any one who would travel in a southerly direction, guiding his course by the stars, would, it sages maintained, arrive at a wonderfully bloomin oasis, the dwelling of a heavenly beautiful enchantres But all this appeared to the speakers to be highly uncertain and mysterious.

The young men looked troubled; and their horse snorted and started back at the treacherous sand, whil even the riders were uneasy and perplexed. Then they sprang from their saddles suddenly, as at som word of command; and taking the bridles from thei horses, and slackening the girths, they turned then loose on the plain, to find their way back to the habita tion of man. They took some provision from thei saddle-bags, placed it on their shoulders, and, casting from their feet their heavy riding-boots, they plunged like two courageous swimmers, into the endless waste.

With no other guide than the sun by day, and by night the host of stars, the two captains soon lost sight of one another; for Frederigo had avoided the object of his displeasure; while Heimbert, thinking of nothing but the end of his journey, and firmly relying upon God's protection, pursued his course in a due southerly direction.

The night had many times succeeded the day, when, one evening, Heimbert was quite alone on the endless desert, without one fixed object for his eye to rest upon ; the light flask he carried was empty ; and the evening brought with it, instead of the desired coolness, only suffocating columns of sand ; so that the exhausted wanderer was obliged to press his burning face to the scorching plain to escape the death-bringing cloud. Sometimes he thought he heard footsteps near him, and the sound of a wide mant'e rustling over him ; but when he raised himself with anxious haste, he only saw what he had already too often seen in the day-time—the wild beasts of the wilderness roaming about the desert in undisturbed freedom. Now it was a frightful camel, then a long-necked ungainly giraffe, or a great ostrich with its wings outspread. They all appeared to scoff at him ; and he resolved to open his eyes no more, but rather perish, without allowing these hateful and strange creatures to disturb his soul in the hour of death.

Soon he heard the sound of horse's hoofs and neighing, and saw a shadow on the sand, and heard a man's voice close to him. Half unwilling, he yet could not resist raising himself wearily ; when he saw a rider in an Arab's dress on a slender Arabian horse. Overcome with joy at the sight of a human being, he exclaimed : “ Welcome, O man, in this frightful waste ! and succour, if thou canst, thy fellow man, who must otherwise perish with thirst.” And then remembering that the tones of his dear German mother-tongue were not intelligible in this joyless land, he repeat'd these words in that common language, the *lingua Romana*, which

is universally used by Mohammedans and Christians in this part of the world.

The Arab was silent some time, and looked with scorn upon his strange discovery. At last he replied in the same language : " I was in Barbarossa's fight, a knight, as well as you ; and if our overthrow affects me bitterly, I now find no little satisfaction at seeing one of our conquerors lying so pitifully before me."

" Pitifully ! " angrily repeated Heimbert ; and his wounded feelings of honor for the moment giving him back all his strength, he seized his sword, and stood in battle order.

" Oh, oh ! " laughed the Arab ; " is the Christian viper so strong ? Then it only remains for me to put spurs to my good steed, and leave thee to perish here thou lost creeping worm."

" Ride where thou list, dog of a heathen ! " retorted Heimbert. " Before I accept a crumb from thee, I will perish, unless the dear God sends me manna in this wilderness."

The Arab spurred his fleet horse, and galloped two hundred paces, laughing long and loud. He stopped, however, and, trotting back to Heimbert, said : " Thou art rather too good a knight to leave to die of hunger and thirst. Have a care, now ; my good sabre shall reach thee."

Heimbert, who had again stretched himself in hopeless despair on the burning sand, was quickly roused by these words to his feet, sword in hand ; and as the Arab's horse flew past him, with a sudden spring the stout German avoided the blow and parried the cut which the rider aimed at him with his Turkish scimitar.

Repeatedly did the Arab make similar attacks, vainly hoping to give his antagonist the death-blow. At last, overcome by impatience, he came so near, that Heimbert was able to seize him by the girdle and tear him from the fast-galloping horse. With this violent exertion, Heimbert also fell to the ground, but he lay above his adversary; and holding a dagger he had pulled from his girdle before his face, he said: "Wilt thou have mercy or death?"

The Arab closed his eyes before the murderous steel, and answered: "Have pity on me, thou brave warrior! I surrender to thee."

Heimbert commanded him to throw away the sabre he still held in his right hand. He did so; and both combatants rose from the ground, to sink again immediately upon the sand; for the conqueror felt himself far weaker than the conquered.

The Arab's good horse had returned to his master, as is the custom of those noble animals, who never forsake even a fallen lord, and now stood behind them, stretching his long slender neck over them with a friendly look.

"Arab," said Heimbert, with exhausted voice, "take from thy horse what provision thou hast, and place it before me."

The subdued Arab did humbly what was commanded him, now submitting to the will of his conqueror, as he had before treated him with revengeful anger.

After taking some draughts of palm-wine from the skin, Heimbert looked at the youth with new eyes. He partook of some fruits, drank again of the wine, and said, "Have you much farther to ride this night, young man?"

"Yes, indeed," answered the Arab, sorrowfull
"Upon a very distant oasis dwells my aged father at
my blooming bride. Now, even if you leave me in
freedom, I must perish in this waste desert before I can
reach my lovely home."

"Is that the oasis," asked Heimbert, "on which the
powerful, magic lady, Zelinda, dwells?"

"Allah forbid!" exclaimed the Arab, clasping his
hands together. "Zelinda's wonderous island receive
none but magicians, and lies far to the scorching south
while our friendly home stretches toward the cool
west."

"I only asked the question to see if we could be
companions by the way," said Heimbert, kindly. "As
that cannot be, we must divide every thing; for I
would not have so good a soldier perish with hunger
and thirst."

Saying this, the young captain began to divide the
fruits and wine into two portions, placing the greater
at his left hand, the smaller at his right, and desired
the Arab to take the former. He listened with astonish-
ment as Heimbert added: "See, good sir, I have
either not much further to pursue my journey, or I shall
die in this desert; of that I have a strong presentiment.
Besides, I cannot carry so much on foot as you can on
horseback."

"Knight! victorious knight!" cried the amazed
Musselman, "do you give me my horse?"

"It would be a sin and shame to deprive so noble a
rider of such a faithful beast," replied Heimbert, smiling.
"Ride on, in God's name! and may you safely
reach your destination."

He assisted him to mount; and just as the Arab was thanking him, he suddenly exclaimed, "The magic lady!" and, putting spurs to his horse, flew over the dusty plain swift as the wind; while Heimbert, on looking round, saw close beside him, in the bright moonlight, a shining figure, which he easily recognized to be Zelinda.

CHAPTER VI.

THE lady looked fixedly at the young soldier, and appeared thinking how she should address him, while he, with astonishment at suddenly finding her he had so long sought, was equally at a loss for words. At length she said in Spanish, "Thou wonderful enigma, I have been witness to all that has passed between thee and the Arab; and the affair perplexes my head as a whirlwind. Tell me plainly, that I may know whether thou art a madman or an angel."

"I am neither one or other, dear lady," answered Heimbert, with his wonted friendliness. "I am only a poor wanderer, who have been obeying one of the commands of his dear Lord Jesus Christ."

"Sit down," said Zelinda, "and relate to me the history of thy lord, who must be an unheard-of person, if he has such servants as thee. The night is cool and still, and beside me thou hast nothing to fear from the dangers of the waste."

"Lady," replied Heimbert, smiling, "I am not of a fearful disposition, and when I am speaking of my

blessed Lord and Redeemer, I know not the least anxiety."

So saying, they both sat down on the now cooled sand, and began a wondrous conversation, while the clear moon shone upon them like a magic lamp from the high blue heavens, Heimbert's words, full of love, and truth, and simplicity, sank like soft sunbeams into Zelinda's heart, driving away the unholy magic power which ruled her, and wrestling with that for possession of the noble territory of her soul. When the morning dawned, she said, "Thou wouldest not be called an angel, but surely thou art one; for what are the angels but messengers of the most high God?"

"In that sense," returned Heimbert, "I am content to be so called. My hope is, to bear His message at all times; and if He bestows further grace and strength upon me, it will give me pleasure if you become my companion in this pious work."

"That is not impossible," said Zelinda, thoughtfully. "But first come with me to my island, where thou shalt be entertained as beseems such an ambassador, far better than here on the desert sand, with miserable palm-wine, which thou must obtain with difficulty."

"Pardon me," answered Heimbert; "it is difficult to refuse a lady any request, but it is unavoidable on this occasion. In your island, many glorious things are brought together by forbidden arts, and their forms are changed from those the Almighty One created. These might dazzle my senses, and in the end enslave them. If you wish to hear more of those best and purest things which I can relate to you, you must come

out to me on this barren sand. The Arab's dates and palm-wine will suffice for many a day yet."

" You would do much better to come with me," said Zelinda, shaking her head with a dissatisfied smile. " You were surely neither born nor educated for a hermit, and there is nothing upon my oasis so very mysterious as you suppose. What is there so strange in birds, and beasts, and flowers, being collected together from different parts of the world, and perhaps a little changed, so that one partakes of the nature of another, as you must have seen in our Arabian pictures? A moving changing flower, a bird growing on a branch, a fountain emitting fiery sparks, a singing bough—these truly are not such frightful, hateful things?"

" He must avoid temptation, who will not be overcome by it," answered Heimbert, very gravely. " I shall remain in the wilderness: is it your pleasure to visit me here again?"

Zelinda looked down, somewhat displeased, then lowly bending her head, she answered, " Yes; tomorrow evening I will be here." She turned away, and immediately disappeared in the rising storm-blast of the desert.

With the return of evening the lovely lady appeared, and watched the night through in holy converse with the inspired youth, leaving him in the morning humbler, purer, and more pious; and this went on for several days. " Thy palm-wine and dates must be consumed," said Zelinda one evening; and placed before Heimbert a flask of rich wine and some costly fruits. He, however, softly put the gifts aside, and answered, " Noble lady, I thank you from my heart, but I fear

these have been made by your magic arts; or can you assure me that they are not, by Him whom you are beginning to know?" Zelinda's eyes sank into silent confusion, and she took back her gifts. The next evening she brought some similar provisions, and, smiling confidently, gave the desired assurance. Then Heimbert partook of them without scruple; and henceforth the pupil hospitably provided for the sustenance of her teacher in the wilderness.

And now, as the knowledge of the truth sank more deeply in Zelinda's soul, so that she often sat till morning listening to the young man with glowing cheek, flowing hair, sparkling eyes, and folded hands, he carefully observed to make her understand that it was on account of his friend he had sought her in this dreary region, and that it was Frederigo's love for her which was the means of the highest good to her soul. She well remembered the handsome, fearless young captain who had stormed the height and clasped her in his arms, and related to their friend how he had saved her in the burning library. Heimbert had many pleasant things to say of Frederigo; of his knightly deeds, his serious mind, and of his love to Zelinda, which, since the capture of Tunis, would not be hidden within his troubled breast, but betrayed itself in a thousand ways, sleeping or waking, to the young German. The godly truth, and the image of her loving hero, entered Zelinda's heart together, and both took root there. Heimbert's presence, and the almost adoring admiration with which his pupil regarded him, did not disturb this state of mind; for from the first moment, his appearance had something too pure and heavenly to allow of any

thoughts of earthly love. When Heimbert was alone, he often smiled to himself, and said in his own beloved German language, "How delightful it is to be able, . . . consciously, to repay Frederigo the service he did me, unconsciously, with his angelic sister!" Then he would sing such lovely German songs of Clara's beauty and pious grace, as sounded strangely pleasant in the wilderness, and beguiled his long and lonely hours.

As once Zelinda came in the evening light, her steps airy and graceful, and carrying a basket of food for Heimbert on her lovely head, he smiled and shook his head, saying, "It is quite incomprehensible to me, lovely maiden, why you continue to come to me in this waste. You cannot find pleasure in magic arts now that the spirit of truth and love dwells within you; and if you changed all things in your oasis into the natural forms which the merciful God gave them, I could go thither with you, and we should have much more time for holy converse."

"Sir knight," answered Zelinda, "you speak truly, and I have thought of doing what you say for many days, but a strange visitor deprives me of the power. The dervish whom you saw in Tunis, is with me; and because in past days we have performed many magic works together, he thinks to usurp his former authority over me now. He perceives the alteration in me, and on that account is the more importunate."

"We must either expel or convert him," said Heimbert, girding on his sword, and taking up his shield from the ground. "Lead me, dear lady, to your wonderful island."

"You avoided it before," answered the astonished damsel, "and it still remains quite unchanged."

"Formerly it would have been only rashness to venture," returned Heimbert. "You came out to me here, which was better for us both. Now, however, the old serpent might destroy in you the work the Lord has done, and it is therefore a knightly duty to go. In God's name, then, to the work." And they hastened together across the darkening plain to the blooming island.

Magic airs began to play about their heads, and bright stars sparkled from the waving boughs beside their path. Heimbert fixed his eyes on the ground, and said, "Go before me, lovely lady, and guide me at once to the place where I shall find the dervish, for I will see as little of these distracting magic forms as is possible."

Zelinda did as he desired; and so, for the moment, each performed the other's part. The maiden was the guide, while Heimbert followed, with confiding friendliness, in the unknown path.

Branches stooped as if to caress their cheek; wonderful singing-birds grew from the bushes; golden and green serpents, with little golden crowns, crept on the velvet turf, on which Heimbert steadfastly bent his eyes, and brilliant stones gleamed from the moss. When the serpents touched these jewels, they gave forth a silvery sound. The soldier let the serpents creep, and the precious stones sparkle, without caring for any thing save to follow hastily the footsteps of his guide.

"We are at the place," said she, with suppressed voice; and looking up, he saw a shining grotto of shells, and perceived within a man asleep, clad in a complete suit of gold scale-armor, of the old Numidian fashion.

"Is that also a phantom, in golden scales?" asked Heimbert, smiling.

"Oh, no," answered Zelinda, very gravely, "it is the dervish himself; and I see, from his having clothed himself in that coat of mail, which has been made invulnerable by being dipped in dragon's blood, that he has, by his magic, made himself aware of our intentions."

"What does that signify?" said Heimbert; "he must know them at last." And he began to call with cheerful voice, "Awake, old man! awake! here is an acquaintance of yours, to whom you must speak."

As the dervish opened his great rolling eyes, all the wondrous things in this magic region began to move; the water to dance, the branches to strike one another in wild confusion, and, at the same time, the jewels, and corals, and shells gave forth strange, perplexing melodies.

"Roll and turn, thunder and play, as you will," cried Heimbert, looking steadfastly around him, "you shall not turn me from my good purpose; and to overpower all this tumult, God has given me a strong, far-sounding, soldier's voice." Then he turned to the dervish, saying, "It appears, old man, that you already know what has passed between Zelinda and me. If you do not know the whole matter, I will tell you, in a few words, that already she is as good as a Christian,

and the bride of a noble Spanish knight. For your own sake, do not put any hindrance in the way ; but it would be far better for you, if you would also become a Christian. Talk to me of this, and command all these devilries to cease ; for see, dear sir, our religion speaks of such divine and heavenly things, that one must lay aside all rough and violent passions."

But the dervish, whose hatred glowed towards all Christians, hardly waited to hear the knight's last words before he pressed upon him with drawn scimitar. Heimbert put aside his thrust, saying, "Take care of yourself, sir : I have heard that your weapons are charmed ; but that avails nought before my good sword, which has been consecrated in holy places." The dervish recoiled from the sword wildly, but as wildly sprang to the other side of his adversary, who only caught the deadly cuts with his target. Like a golden scaly dragon, the Mohammedan swung himself round Heimbert, with a ferocity which, with his long flowing white beard, had something ghastly and horrible in it. Heimbert was prepared to oppose him on all sides, only watching carefully for some opening in the scales made by his violent movements. At last it happened as he expected : he saw between the breast and arm the dark garments of the dervish, and there the German made his deadly thrust. The old man cried, "Allah ! Allah !" and fell, fearful even in his fall, senseless to the ground.

" Yet I pity him," sighed Heimbert, leaning on his sword, and looking down on his fallen foe ; " he fought nobly, and in his death he called upon his Allah, whom he believes to be the true God. We must give him

honorable burial." He dug a grave with the broad scimitar of his adversary, laid the corpse in it, covering it with turf, and knelt in silent, heartfelt prayer for the soul of the departed.

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN Heimbert rose from his pious duty, his first glance fell on the smiling Zelinda, who stood by his side; the second, upon the completely changed scene around. Grottos and caverns had vanished, and with them also the half-terrible, half-charming caricatures of trees and beasts; a gentle hillock of the softest green sloped on each side from the point where he stood to the sandy plain. Several little springs of water murmured in refreshing beauty, and date-trees overhung the pleasant spot, all now smiling with simple sweet peace in the beams of the rising sun.

"Lady," said Heimbert to his companion, "you can now feel how immeasurably greater and more beautiful is all that the dear Father of us all has created than any work of man's highest art. To assist Him in his gracious works has the Heavenly Gardener, in his abundant mercy, granted to us, his beloved children, that we may become thereby better and happier; but we should be especially careful not to walk in our own rash, willful ways: this it is which drives us a second time from Paradise."

"It shall not happen again," said Zelinda, humbly kneeling before the youth. "Wouldst thou dare, in

this desolate region, where we can meet with no prize of our faith, to bestow upon me, who am now changed without farther delay, the blessing of Holy Baptism?

Heimbert answered, after a thoughtful pause, ‘I hope I may do this: if I am wrong, God will pardon what is surely done in zeal to bring to Him so worth a soul as soon as possible.’

They walked side by side to one of the springs of the oasis, silently praying, and their souls filled with peaceful hope. By the time they had reached it, and addressed themselves to the holy work, the sun had risen in glory, as if to confirm and strengthen them in the purpose; so that their beaming countenances looked joyful and confiding to one another. Heimbert had not thought of what Christian name he would bestow upon his neophyte; but as he sprinkled the water over her, and saw the desert-sea, so solemn in the glow of morning, he remembered the pious hermit Antonius in his Egyptian waste, and baptized the lovely convert Antonia.

They passed the day in holy conversation, and Antonia shewed her friend a little cave where she used to keep her provisions, when she first dwelt on this oasis. “For,” she said, “the good God is my witness that my motive for coming hither was to become better acquainted with Him and His works in solitude, without the least thought of learning magic arts. Then came the dervish tempting me; and he drew, by his horrid power, the evil spirits of the desert into a league against me, and they allured me to make all the things they shewed me either in dreams or awake.”

Heimbert had no scruple to take with him from thi

store whatever of wine and dried fruits would be useful for their journey. Antonia assured him that the way, which was very well known to her, would lead them in a few days to the fruitful shore of this waterless ocean. With the approach of evening coolness they began their wanderings.

The travelers had almost traversed this pathless plain, when, one day, they saw a wandering figure at a very great distance; for in the boundless Sahara every object is visible an immense way off, if the whirlwind of the desert raises no sandy columns to intercept the view. This unfortunate man seemed uncertain which way to direct his steps, sometimes taking one direction, and then changing to the opposite one. Antonia's oriental falcon-eyes could discover that it was no Arab, but a man in knightly garb.

"Oh, dear sister," said Heimbert, with eager joy, "it must be poor Frederigo seeking thee! For God's sake, let us hasten, lest he lose us, and perhaps his own life also, in this immeasurable waste."

They strove with all their power to reach him, but, owing to the burning sun (for it was now mid-day,) Antonia could not long support these hasty steps; and soon the fearful storm-blast raised the cloud of sand, which completely obscured the object of their search.

With the rising moon they renewed their pursuit, calling loudly upon Frederigo, and making signal-flags of their white handkerchiefs tied to their walking-staffs; but all in vain. The object which had disappeared remained invisible. Only a few giraffes sprang timidly before them, and the ostriches crossed their path with winged speed.

At last, when morning dawned, Antonia stopped, and said, "Thou canst not leave me alone, brother, in the wilderness, and I cannot go one step further. God will protect the noble Frederigo; for how can a Father forsake so excellent a child?"

"The pupil shames the tutor," returned Heimbert, his sorrowful face brightening into a smile. "We have done our parts, and may confidently leave the rest to God, hoping He will assist our helplessness." He spread his mantle on the sand, that Antonia might rest more comfortably; but suddenly looked up, exclaiming, "O God! there is a man quite buried in the sand! oh that he may not be already dead!"

Immediately he began to sprinkle wine from the little flask upon his forehead, and to chase his temples with it. At length he slowly opened his eyes, and said, "Oh that the morning-dew had not again fallen on me, then I should have perished unknown and un lamented in this desert, as it must happen at last! With these words he closed his eyes again, like one drunken with sleep; but Heimbert unceasingly continued his endeavors to restore him, and after some time the wearied wanderer half raised himself on the sand.

He looked from Heimbert to his companion, and again at Heimbert, and suddenly exclaimed, gnashing his teeth with rage, "It is even so: I shall not perish in the dim obscurity of forgetfulness; I have lived to see the success of my rival, and my sister's shame!" He sprang eagerly to his feet, and rushed on Heimbert with drawn sword. The German moved neither sword nor arm, but answered, with a friendly voice, "So exhaust

ed as thou art, I cannot possibly take advantage of thee ; besides, I must first place this lady in security."

Antonia, who had looked at first with much emotion on the angry knight, now stepped between the two, and said, "Oh, Frederigo, neither misery nor anger can entirely disfigure thee ; but in what has my noble brother offended thee ?"

"*Brother !*" repeated Frederigo, with astonishment.

"Or godfather, or confessor," said Heimbert : "call me which you please ; only call this lady no longer Zelinda—her name is Antonia ; she is a Christian, and thy bride !"

Frederigo stood lost in astonishment ; but Heimbert's true-hearted words and Antonia's lovely blushes interpreted the enigma for him. He sank before the long-cherished image of his lady ; and here, in this inhospitable desert, there bloomed to heaven a flower of love, gratitude, and faith.

The excitement of this overpowering happiness at last gave way to bodily fatigue. Antonia reposed her delicate limbs on the now scorching sand, like a drooping flower, and slept under the protection of her lover and chosen brother.

"Sleep thou also," said Heimbert softly to Frederigo ; "thou must have wandered far, for weariness is stamped upon thine eyelids, while I am quite fresh, and will watch beside thee."

"Ah, Heimbert," sighed the noble Castilian, "my sister is thine, thou messenger of heaven—that is an understood thing ; but for our unfinished quarrel—"

"Certainly," interrupted Heimbert, very gravely, "thou must satisfy me for every hasty word when we

are again in Spain. But, till then, I beg thou will never mention it, for it is no fit topic of conversation."

Frederigo sorrowfully reposed on the sand, over powered by long-resisted sleep; and Heimbert knelt to thank God for so many gracious blessings already bestowed, and for placing so joyful a future before him.

The next day the three travelers reached the border of the desert, and refreshed themselves with a week's rest at a little village hard by; which, with its shadowing trees and soft green pastures, seemed like a little Paradise compared to the joyless Sahara. Frederigo's condition made this rest particularly necessary; for he had not once left the desert, and was often compelled to fight with the wandering Arabs for his subsistence, and sometimes he had suffered the total want of food and drink. At length he became so perplexed, that the stars no longer sufficed to guide him, and he was driven about, sorrowful and aimless, like the whirlwind of the desert.

Even now, when he fell asleep after the noon-day meal, and Antonia and Heimbert watched his slumbers like two smiling angels, he would suddenly awake in terror, and look round him with horror, till, reassured by their friendly faces, he sunk back again to rest. In answer to the questions they put to him when he was fully awake, he said that, in his wanderings, nothing had been more horrible to him than the deceitful dreams which sometimes carried him to his own home, sometimes into the merry camp of his comrades, and sometimes even into Zelinda's neighborhood, and doubled, by contrast, the helpless misery of the frightful desert. This it was which always gave to the mo-

ment of waking something fearful, and even in sleep he retained a dim consciousness of past sufferings.

" You cannot think," added he, " what it was to be suddenly banished from the well-known scenes to the endless waste, where, instead of the long-desired enchanting countenance of my beloved, I only saw the long neck of a hateful camel curiously stretched over me, and with yet more hateful timidity springing away as I rose."

This, together with other effects of his misfortunes, soon passed away from Frederigo's mind, and they continued their journey to Tunis. Yet the remembrance of his conduct to Heimbert, and its unavoidable consequences, spread like a cloud over the noble Spaniard's brow, and softened the natural sternness of his character, so that Antonia could cling more closely to him with her loving heart.

Tunis, which had been the scene of Zelinda's magic power, and of her zeal against the Christians, now witnessed her solemn baptism in a newly-consecrated edifice; and immediately afterwards the three companions embarked with favorable winds for Malaga.

CHAPTER VIII.

BESIDE the fountain where she had parted from Heimbert, Doña Clara sat one evening in deep thought. The guitar on her arm gave forth a few solitary chords, which her delicate hand dreamily enticed from it; and at last they formed themselves into a melody, while

the following words were murmured from her hal opened lips :

“ Say who, by Tunis’ walls afar,
Where with grim bands of Paynim might
The Spaniard and the German fight,—
From lilies dark with gory dew,
And roses of death’s pallid hue,
Say, who hath won the prize of war ?

Of Alva ask the tale of fame,
And he two knights of pride will name :
One was my brother, tried and brave ;
One, he whom my heart I gave :
And fain I hoped, in joyous light,
To weave their garlands doubly bright.

But sadly o’er my eyes and brow
A widow’s veil falls doubly now ;
The knights are gone, and ne’er again
Shall they be found ’mid living men.”

The guitar was silent, and soft dew-drops fell from her heavenly eyes. Heimbert, who was hidden behind the neighboring orange-tree, felt sympathetic tears roll down his cheeks ; and Frederigo, who had led him and Antonia in by the garden-way, would no longer keep the cup of joy from the restored ones, but disclosed himself, with a dear form on either arm, as a messenger from heaven to his sister.

But such moments of high overpowering delight, like the most precious and long-expected heavenly blessings, are better imagined than described. It is only doing an ill service to recount what this one said, and that

one did. Picture it then to thyself, dear reader, after thine own fancy, if the two pairs in my story have become dear to thee, and thou art now intimate with them. If this be not the case, my words would be lost upon thee. For those, then, who with hearty pleasure have dwelt on the réunion of sister and lover, I will proceed with increased satisfaction.

When Heimbert, casting a significant look at Frederigo, wished to retire, after having placed Antonia in Dofia Clara's protection, the noble Spaniard would not permit him. He detained his companion with the most courteous and brotherly kindness, entreating him to remain till the evening banquet, at which many distinguished persons of the family of Mendez were present. In their presence Frederigo declared that the brave Heimbert of Waldhausen was Dofia Clara's bridegroom: at the same time calling them to witness the sealing it with the most solemn words, in order that whatever might afterwards happen, which should seem inimical to their contract, it might yet remain indissoluble. The spectators were somewhat astonished at these strange precautionary measures, though no one opposed Frederigo's desire, but unhesitatingly gave him their word that they would carry out his wishes. Their ready compliance was greatly caused by Duke Alva's having, during his late sojourn in Malaga, filled the whole city with his praises of the two heroic young captains.

When the generous wines were circulating round the table, Frederigo stepped behind Heimbert's chair, and whispered, "If it please you, señor, the moon is now risen and shining bright as day: I am ready to meet

you." Heimbert bowed assentingly, and the youth left the hall, followed by the sweet salutations of the unsuspecting brides.

As they passed through the blooming gardens, Frederigo said, "Ah! how happily we might have walked together here, had it not been for my rashness!"

"Yes, truly," answered Heimbert; "but as it has happened, and cannot now be otherwise, we will proceed, and only look upon one another as soldiers and noblemen."

"Even so," replied Frederigo; and they hastened off to the farthest part of the gardens, where the sound of their clashing arms might not reach the high banqueting hall.

Silent and enclosed amid dark groves was the chosen spot. No sounds could be heard there from the joyous company, no noise from the populous streets of the city. Only high in heaven the full moon shone down with bright beams upon the solemn circle. It was the right place. Both captains drew their shining blades, and stood opposite to one another, ready for the combat; but before they began, a kindlier feeling drew them to each other; they lowered their weapons, and embraced in the most brotherly manner, then they tore themselves away, and the fearful fight began.

They were now no more brothers in arms—no more friends—no more brothers in law, who raised the sharp swords against each other. With firm boldness, but with cool collectedness, they fell upon one another, whilst each guarded his own breast at the same time. After a few hot deadly passes, the combatants were compelled to rest, and they regarded one another with

increased love ; each rejoicing to find his dear comrade so stout and courageous. Then the fierce strife began anew.

Heimbert dashed aside Frederigo's sword with his left hand as it was thrust at his side, but the keen edge had penetrated through his leathern glove, and the rosy blood gushed out.

"Halt!" cried Frederigo ; and they searched for the wound ; but finding it of no importance, they bound it up, and with undiminished ardor renewed the fight. It was not long before Heimbert's sword pierced Frederigo's shoulder, and the German, conscious that it had done so, cried in his turn, "Halt." At first Frederigo would not acknowledge that there was a wound ; but when the blood streamed forth, he accepted his friend's assistance. This wound also seeming of no consequence, and the noble Spaniard finding himself strong enough in arm and hand to wield the sword, they pursued the deadly contest.

Then they heard a garden-door open, and the tread as of a horse from the groves. Both combatants stayed their stern work, and turned to the unwelcome visitant. The next moment they saw through the slender pines some one approaching whose bearing and dress shewed that he was a warrior, mounted on a stately charger ; and Frederigo, as master of the house, said to him, "Señor, why you have intruded into a strange garden, we will inquire another time. I shall now only beg of you to retire from it at once, and to leave me your name."

"I shall not retire at present," answered the stranger ; "but my name I will gladly tell you. I am the Duke of Alva."

At this moment the moonbeams fell upon his stern pale face—that dwelling-place of all that was noble, and great, and majestic. The two captains bowed low and sank their arms.

"I surely know you," said Alva, looking at them fixedly with his dark eyes. "Yes, truly, I do know you, you two young heroes of the battle of Tunis. God be blessed and praised, that I find two such noble warriors alive, whom I had almost given up for lost. But tell me now, what has turned your brave swords against each other? I trust you will not object to lay open before me the cause of this knightly encounter."

They complied with the great duke's behest. Both the youths related their history, from the evening before the embarkation till the present moment; whilst Alva remained motionless before them in deep meditation, looking almost like an equestrian statue.

The captains had already long ended their story, and the duke still remained silent and motionless in deep meditation. At last he addressed them in the following manner:—

"May God and His holy word help me, my young knights, as I tell you, with my best wisdom and truth of heart, that I believe this affair of yours to be now perfectly settled. Twice have you fought with one another on account of the irritating words which escaped Don Frederigo's lips: and if indeed the slight wounds which you have hitherto received are not sufficient, still, your having been comrades in the fight at Tunis, and Sir Heimbert of Waldhausen having saved Don Frederigo Mendez' life in the desert, after he had rescued his bride for him in battle, all this gives

the knight of Waldhausen the privilege of forgiving an enemy every offence, to whom he has shewn himself so well inclined. The old Roman history tells us of two centurions under the great Julius Cæsar who settled a dispute, and contracted a hearty brotherly friendship, from fighting side by side, and delivering one another out of the midst of the Gallic army. But I affirm that you two have done more for each other; and therefore I declare this affair to be entirely settled and at an end. Sheathe your swords, then, and embrace in my presence."

Obedient to their general's command, the young knights for the present put up their swords; but, anxious lest the slightest shade should fall upon their honor, they yet delayed the reconciling embrace.

The great Alva looked somewhat sternly upon them, and said, "Do you suppose, young knights, that I could desire to save the lives of two soldiers at the expense of their good name? Sooner than that, I would rather see you both struck dead at once. But I see that with such obstinate men, one must proceed to more effective measures." And leaping from his horse, which he bound to a tree, he stepped between the two captains with a drawn sword in his right hand, crying out, "Whoever takes upon him to deny that the quarrel between Sir Heimbert of Waldhausen and Don Frederigo Mendez is nobly and honorably settled, shall have to do with Duke Alva for life or death. And should either of the aforesigned knights object to this, let him declare it. I stand as champion for my own opinion."

The youths bowed to their great umpire, and sank

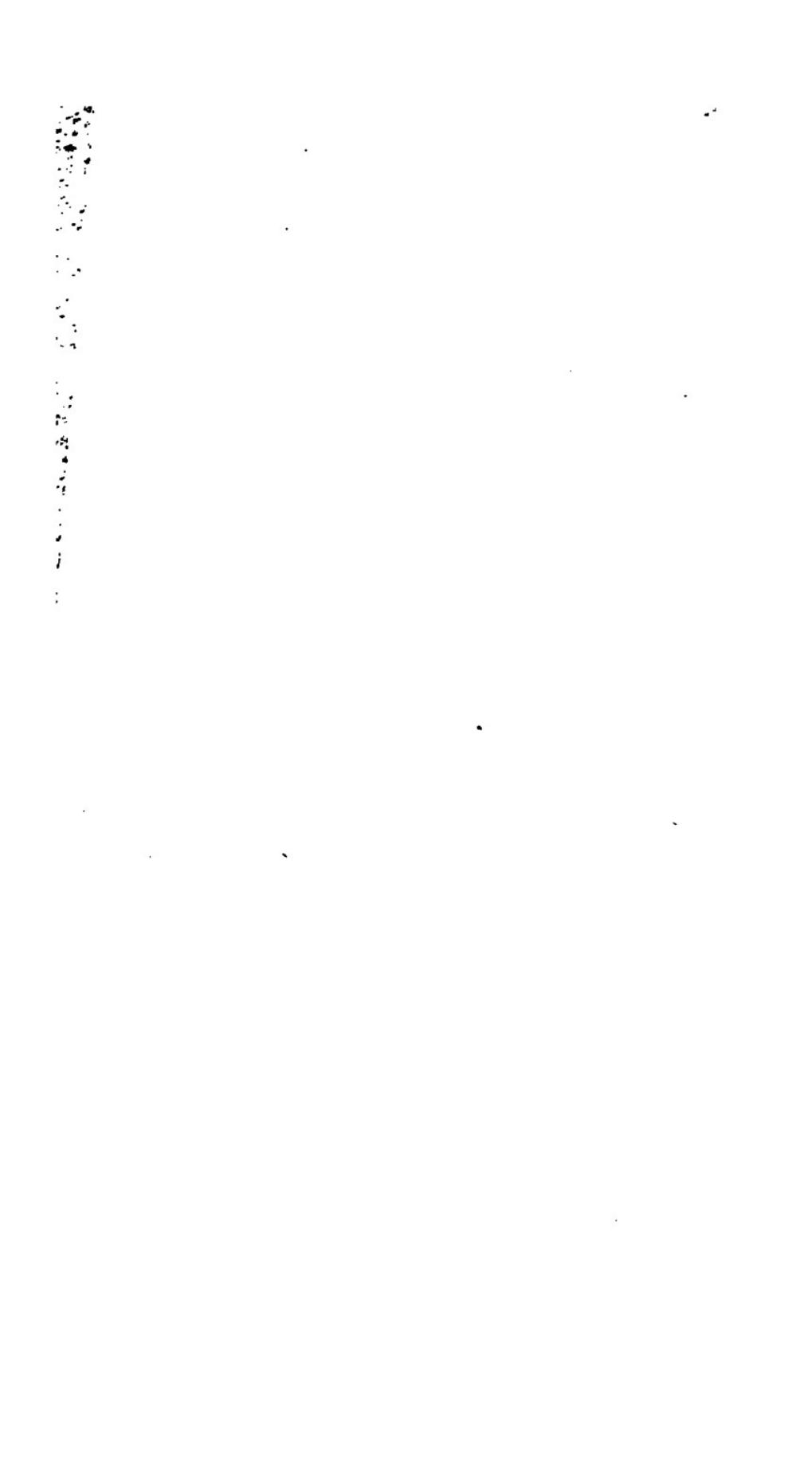
into one another's arms. The duke embraced them with heartfelt affection, which appeared the more charming and refreshing, as any outward demonstration of it was seldom to be seen in this strong-minded man.

Then he led the reconciled ones back to their brides; and when these, after the first joyful surprise at the presence of the much-honored general was over, started back on perceiving drops of blood on the youths' garments, the duke said laughingly, "Oh! the brides-elect of soldiers must not shrink from such medals of honor."

The Duke Alva took on himself to stand as father to both the happy brides, and to fix the festival of their betrothal for the very next day. From this time forth they all lived in undisturbed concord; and when Sir Heimbert was recalled with his lovely spouse to the bosom of his native Germany, the two families yet continued near each other by letters and constant communications. And in after times the descendants of the lord of Waldhausen boasted their connection with the family of Mendez, while the latter ever preserved the tradition of the brave and magnanimous Heimbert of Waldhausen.

THE END.





NATALIA,
ASLAUGA'S KNIGHT,
AND OTHER TALES.

EDITED BY A LADY.

*Love, quiet, yet flowing deep, as the Rhine among rivers;
lasting, and knowing not change—it walketh with Truth and Sincerity."*

PROVERBIAL PHILOSOPHY.

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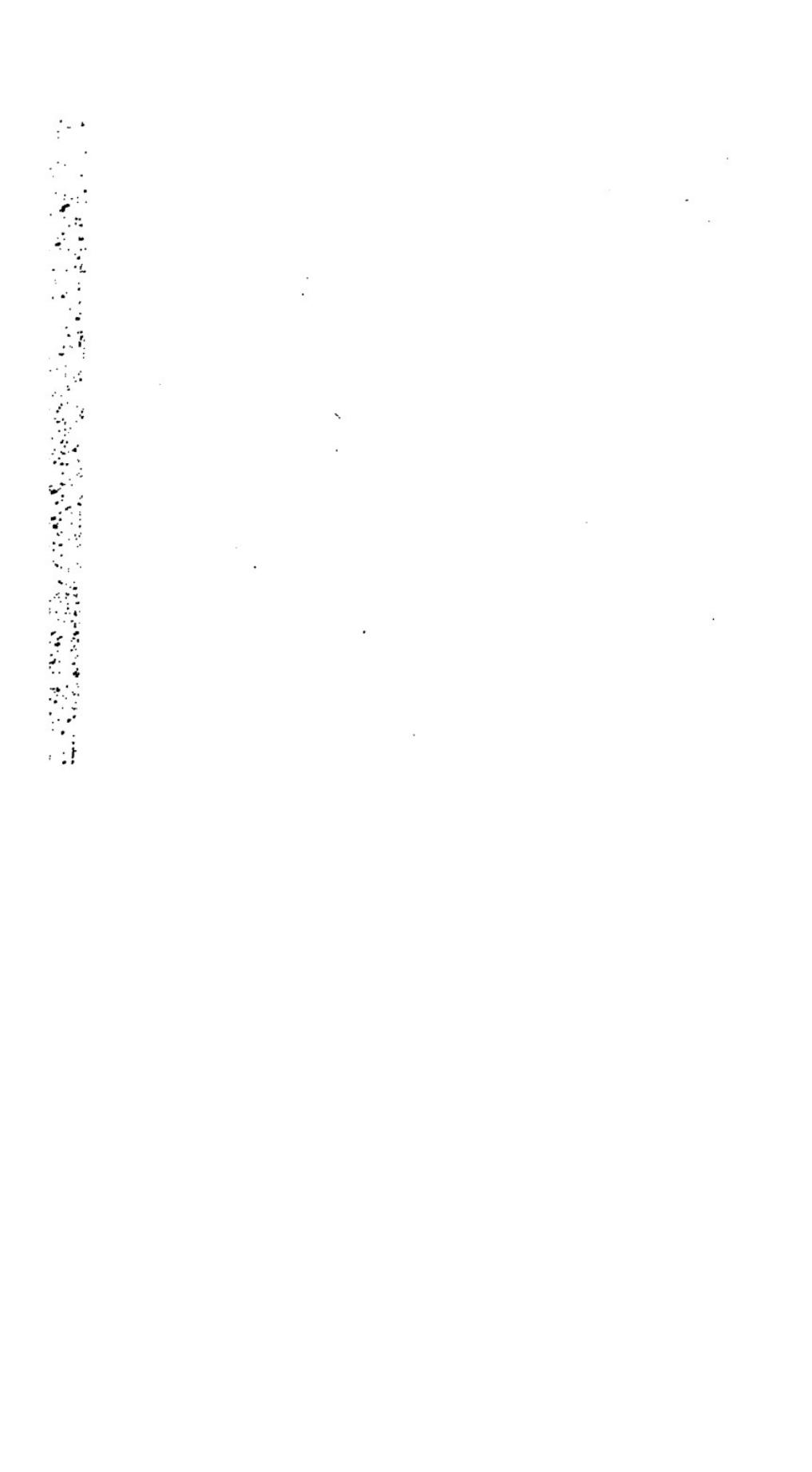
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P R E F A C E.

IN commencing this series of works, which is called "THE FIRESIDE LIBRARY OF POPULAR READING," we propose to offer such tales of truth and fiction as are well adapted to the cultivation of good affections and true thoughts. The editor enters upon her task and makes her selections with much interest, and cannot but hope they will be approved.

The tales in this first number are various in their styles—"Blanche Rose," illustrating the affections with touching power; "Aslauga's Knight," (by the author of Undine) manifests that enduring love which is truly self-sacrificing, and will last forever; and "Natalia," which illustrates that charming modesty so delightful in the female character, and that manliness, and true respect for woman, in the other sex, so admirable and praiseworthy.



NATALIA.

MICHAEL FEDOROWITZ, Czar of all the Russias, was son to Philaretes, bishop of Rostow; his mother was a lineal descendant of the ancient sovereigns of Russia. Demetrius, a tyrannical usurper, sent Philaretes ambassador to Poland, where he was detained prisoner, under pretence that his countrymen were, not long before, in rebellion against king Uladislaus. This outrage was unquestionably sanctioned by Demetrius; for he confined the wife of Philaretes in a nunnery. But the boyars entertained such a high veneration for the bishop and his spouse, that they unanimously elected their son, Michael Federowitz, to be their emperor, though he was not more than fifteen years of age. Philaretes, being exchanged for some Polish captives, was by his son appointed patriarch of the church; and with great wisdom and prosperity assisted the inexperience of the youthful czar in exercising the functions of royalty.

Michael Federowitz governed Russia thirty-three years; and the firmness of his administration, tempered by leniency, established his power; while happiness and peace, long unknown, endeared him to the people. Desirous of choosing a consort on the ground of personal attachment, the czar gave orders to collect at Moscow a vast number of fat cattle and poultry, and to provide game and fish, to be frozen and stored in the commencement of winter, with all other necessaries for

entertaining a crowd of guests at the palace. At the same time he issued proclamations throughout the empire, inviting, or in other words, commanding all the young and beautiful maidens in his dominions to repair to the court. Michael visited his fair subjects as an easy guest at private parties; or presided at royal feasts and balls for their amusement. When the weather permitted a return to their respective homes, they were dismissed with gifts befitting regal munificence; and the lady who was honored by preference was informed of her elevation by the czar sending to her a superb wedding robe. The lady's name was Strechen. Her father was ploughing his farm when he received the announcement that he was destined to be father-in-law to the emperor.

Alexius succeeded his father Michael; and though unfortunate in his wars with Sweden, he was a prince of eminent genius. He promoted agriculture; introduced silk and linen manufactures; and endeavored to excite in his boyars a taste for the arts and sciences; giving them an example in his own studies, and patronizing literature, with all the branches of useful knowledge which had travelled to Northern Europe. He instituted and published a code of laws, still referred to in the jurisprudence of Russia; and he greatly improved his army by establishing a regular system of discipline. He chose his first wife in the same manner as his father, and was married in his seventeenth year. In ten years he was a widower; and twenty months had not elapsed, when, before the fairest in his extensive realms were submitted to his election, his affections were fixed upon a beautiful orphan named Natalia Kesilowna Narishkin. This historical *trait d'amour*, which has more the air of romance than of the sober pace appropriate to hymenial engagements in real life, is little known out of Russia, unless by foreigners who have made curious inquiries concerning the ancient manners of that singular region.

Alexius purposed to win the heart of an amiable woman for

his own sake ; and with this aim laid aside every mark of extrinsic advantages, while he made a circuit some considerable way from Moscow, or visited the middle classes in the city, as an herbalist in search of medicinal plants ; a naturalist anxious to explore the salt-pits of Astracan ; or one of the literati in quest of MSS. of ancient history, said to be preserved in the huts of the boors. Sometimes the czar passed as a trader in morocco leather from Kasan, or a learned teacher belonging to one of the numerous schools established in that country at a very early period. A small band of trusty attendants followed at short distances ; and without confiding his ulterior views, he gathered from them much information concerning the families he visited, and regarding the actual state of his people. Many months rolled on in these incognito perigrinations, and our royal *Cælebs in search of a wife* almost despaired of success, when the accomplishment of his most sanguine hopes appeared in the form of transcendent beauty and intellectual graces, seldom known in a barbarous age.

A gentleman, named Matweof, had been often serviceable by furnishing suggestions for the improvement of various schemes adopted by the czar to correct the rugged ignorance of his subjects ; and having returned to Moscow, the sovereign recollect ed that he ought to bestow on this worthy man of science the distinction of a visit, though his family consisted only of sons. While revolving these thoughts as he walked alone on the banks of the Moskwa, near the city, he saw Matweof within call, and accosted him. After the first salutations, the czar said, " Matweof, if thou hast no strangers at thy house, I will dine with thee to-day."

" My liege, I have not even my sons at home ; they are dispersed to different occupations : I have only my wife and the sweet child of a deceased friend." " Depend on me as your guest ; but mark me, you must not tell even your wife my real name. Let me pass as a merchant." " A merchant of Kasan,

so please your highness?" "Be it so; and take care to treat me as such only."

Matweof, when overtaken by the czar, was on his way to ask a merchant of Kasan to spend the day with him; and had desired his wife to prepare for his reception. It may be supposed that he deferred this engagement, and the czar was received by Madame Matweof as the expected trader. He was ushered to the dining-hall by Matweof; and his surprise and pleasure were unbounded, when he saw a young and beautiful girl, towering far above the stature of his hostess. "I fancied your ward was a child," said the reputed merchant of Kasan. "She is not fifteen," answered the bustling hostess; "and the longer she is tractable to good advice as a child, the wiser must she be when we regard her as a woman. I was good eight years older than she is now, before I gave my vows to Matweof; and till an hour within the change of my condition I was called a child."

The czar employed his eyes more than his ears while Madame Matweof gave him a specimen of the wisdom acquired in her protracted childhood. We shall leave his majesty to admire the blushing Natalia, and try to give the courteous reader some idea of her protectress. Madame Matweof was a low-sized, corpulent person, but very lively and active; and more than commonly addicted to fluency of language, as she piqued herself not a little upon the smattering of knowledge she had acquired on a diversity of topics, during thirty-four years, in domesticating with the most intelligent gentleman in the vast city of Moscow. The courtly stranger paid to her all due attention, yet his eyes frequently reverted to the lovely features of her ward, who, in the simple garb of her own country, dazzled his imagination more than the proudest that in embroidery, ermine, and jewels, sparkled within the precincts of the Kremlin.

The fine contour of Natalia's face was partly shaded by curl-

ing ringlets of pale brown hair, encircled by a wreath of ivy leaves, intermingled with a few garden flowers. The crown of her head was covered by a cap of black velvet, which at the same age probably had been worn by her grandmother, for it was rather threadbare, and the band of gold lace surrounding the middle of this *coiffure*, was evidently tarnished by unsparring time. A short robe of fine white linen, almost after the model of a chemise, with long and wide sleeves, had these drawn up to the shoulders by strips of taffety of the same texture, with a rose-colored sash, which, compressing the linen robe, shewed the elegance of her waist. The skirts of her linen robe hung down half way over a many-colored and checquered petticoat, reaching no further than the calf of her leg, and displaying the delicate symmetry of her ankles and feet. The hem of the checquered petticoat had a border of old lace, seemingly coeval with the bandeau on her black velvet cap. Her stockings of bright blue, were topped with circles of rose color, corresponding to her sash; and her shoes of Kasan leather, were tied with strips of rose-colored taffety. The checquered silk handkerchief on her neck had a faded resemblance to the hues of which the rest of her dress was composed; and three rows of glass beads hung on her bosom, with an image of St. Nicholas, in silver, of curious antique workmanship, appended to the upper row of beads—this image being apparently the only relic of former affluence undecayed by the altered fortunes of her house. How exquisite must have been the personal and mental attractions which subdued the heart of a mighty potentate accustomed to all the glare of Asiatic magnificence, and now beholding Natalia in a garniture of poverty that his lowest attendant would have disdained to wear!

The czar, according to his masquerade designation, was habited in a loose coat of brown cloth, drawn about his loins by a girdle of rich purple silk. His long and wide trowsers were of orange-colored Indian cotton; and he wore Kasan

leather boots without stockings. A silver-hilted scimetar was suspended by a shoulder-belt of yellow leather on one side, and on the other under his arm, a pouch of lynx skin, fastened by silver clasps, contained his money or other portable valuables. His shirt was nearly shaped like Natalia's chemise robe, and left open at the throat, to allow full scope to his ample beard, a shade darker than Natalia's ringlets. His figure was tall and handsome; and his regular manly features expressed a benevolent yet energetic character.

An old man and woman brought every dish to the door of the dining hall, and, under the direction of Madame Matweof, they were placed on the table by Natalia. "I pray you to be seated, my thrice-welcome friend," said Matweof; "the beluga cools fast." "The dinner appears to be excellent," replied the guest; "but its relish will be lost to me, if these ladies stand aloof, as they seem to intend." "Never mind us," said Madame Matweof; "I have no platters at home except those you see on the table. Neighbor Dubrowski borrowed them yesterday for her daughter's wedding feast; and all our servants are lending her a helping hand but our old gardener and his wife. I sent this forenoon for a few of my platters, and one or two of my women; however, my good neighbor said it would be inconvenient to spare them, and it would be ill luck to change her plan. I have no faith in silly omens; but would not vex an old friend by making her wait till you have done."

The czar was gratified by this unceremonious proof that Matweof had not divulged his secret; and he gaily responded, "What signifies the want of platters, my good lady? You can eat with your husband, and the fair damsel will confer a zest on the nice viands by condescending to share them with me."—"Indeed I am not in the least anxious for dinner," replied Natalia; "and, as the servants are absent, shall with pleasure wait on you and my friends." "Yet I warrant you,"

interposed Madame Matweof, "that if you unroll a musty parchment with historical records from the south-east of your country, she would be eager to devour it with all her eyes.

Natalia smiled, and the czar rising, drew her gently to a seat beside him. Having prevailed with her to partake of the repast, he looked to Matweof, saying, "So your fair ward can read and write? these are rare attainments!" Madame Matweof, more prompt in verbiage than her husband, replied: "To be sure! she reads and writes so well that she might be chief secretary to the czar; (St. Nicholas bless and prosper him!) and yet her distaff produces more yarn than any girl I know. She wastes not a moment from dawn to a late hour at night, and was a mere infant when she learnt to use her pen!" Natalia's blushes in vain deprecated these encomiums; but Madame Matweof persisted, till in a low voice she mildly interrupted her protectress, saying, "I owe all to you, who had the goodness to teach me every kind of work; and my indulgent guardian who took the trouble of directing me to use the pen." — "My dear child!" said Matweof, "you gave me no trouble, since you really learned faster than I could find leisure to afford you instruction."

The czar, enraptured, eyed the eloquent looks of Natalia, in this affectionate discussion of her early studies. Matweof observed that he ate very little, but would not presume to urge the royal appetite; while the assiduous hostess, quite ignorant of his high quality, upbraided her husband for neglecting his guest, and stretching her large arms, and protruding her broad face over the table, heaped his plate with choice bits. Her amplitude of countenance was the more remarkable in contrast with the delicate features of Natalia; and the matronly costume of Russia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries required the hair to be gathered upon the summit of the head, and wholly covered by a black velvet cap. Madame Matweof's cap was of massive and new velvet, with

two bandeaus of broad and brilliant gold lace. The rest of her attire resembled that of Natalia, except that the materials were much finer, and of recent date. Matweof saw that his wife taxed the czar's good-nature by frequent interruptions to his conversation with Natalia : he therefore overcame his habitual taciturnity and engaged her in talking to himself; but the exhaustless tide of her volubility was sometimes diverted from the conjugal auditor, to recommend the rye-cakes and honey, the metheglin and rye-brandy, to the merchant of Kasan ; and she could hardly suppress her impatient wonder that he would neither eat nor drink, and yet loitered over his platter and cup as if he never wished to leave the table. In truth he was intent upon taking the dimensions of Natalia's understanding, and penetrating every recess of her disposition, by agitating a great variety of subjects, on which she spoke with artless freedom and unassuming intelligence, little aware of the impression she made, or of the identity of him who listened and looked as if he could be riveted to her side. Madame Matweof at length said she must see what the old folks were about : and beckoning to Natalia, they disappeared together.

" That sweet maiden must be a treasure to thee," said the czar.

" She is the balsam of my declining years. Now that my sight is impaired she reads to me ; and when the shades of evening suspend the delights of study, she assists my failing memory by recapitulating what we have gathered from the stores of the learned."

" Thou shouldst transfer her to the cherishing bosom of a good husband ; while young and pliant she can accommodate herself to his peculiarities — and all men, more or less, have peculiar habits."

" My liege, she is too good for a sick nurse, to tend the couch of an old fellow that has married her to secure for himself her patient diligent cares ; and may my child go unmarr-

ried to the grave rather than bind herself to a young giddy pate, wildly enamored of her beauty, who will worship her for some weeks and then behave as if he had purchased a bond-woman, and not a wife. I will not leave her unportioned; and I pray she may live single, if she is not destined for a spouse that can appreciate her merits."

"I will help thee in searching for a tender guardian of Natalia's happiness; but I should not like to find her averse to my choice, and partial to another."

"I am certain she has never bestowed a thought upon any of the sex. She knows my fears of making her over to a tyrant, and is strongly prepossessed against matrimony. She is perfectly satisfied to take refuge in a convent when my wife and I are no more."

"Good. I shall be thy guest again in four days, and in the mean time let us omit no exertion in behalf of the fair Natalia."

In the evening Matweof called for the real merchant of Kasan, and found a note from him, purporting that he had received a sudden call to deliver a large quantity of goods, but he had taken upon himself to introduce the son of a wealthy correspondent at Astracan. The young gentleman was intrusted to deliver this note, and promised to dine with Matweof the following day.

Natalia's estimation of the supposed trader of Kasan was greatly enhanced by a comparison with the awkward effectuation of this self-important coxcomb. He was at no pains to conceal that he knew himself to be very handsome; and spoke of his father's opulence, as if he inherited from it all kinds of talents and virtues. He quaffed rye-brandy till he became intoxicated, and so familiar that Natalia left the room. He insisted upon seeing her again, and made down-right proposals of marriage. Madame Matweof considered him to be a match too splendid to be lost, and compelled Natalia to return and

hear him plead for himself. She answered with a decided rejection; and Matweof internally applauded her good sense and spirit, though he deemed it right to leave her at entire liberty to accept or decline the offer.

The czar came on the fourth day as he had promised. Matweof took care to intercept him by the way, to mention that his wife and Natalia believed the young blade from Astracan to be the son of his partner. Alexius said he would answer them in conformity to that notion, if they asked any questions. Matweof was insensibly led to communicate the precipitate wooing of the conceited youth, and Natalia's inflexible rejection; with which the czar seemed more pleased than he allowed himself to declare, especially when informed that the fair damsel withheld the solicitations of Madame Matweof in behalf of the worthy admirer; and with respectful determination had affirmed she was ready to go to a convent, but could not give herself to a man whose foibles must excite her contempt. During several weeks the czar was a frequent visiter; and his attentions to Natalia were received with a timid embarrassment, from which he drew the most delightful inferences. One day after dinner he took from his bosom an embroidered silk handkerchief, and, unfolding it, shewed three strings of amber beads, to which was affixed a golden image of St. Nicholas. He presented these tempting gifts to Natalia, and made an effort to untie the faded wrap on her neck. She recoiled with an indignant suffusion overspreading her face, and in a tremulous voice said:—

“ If such must be the terms of your present, take it back. Even our good and great sovereign lord the czar would not find me passive under an insult so degrading.”

“ You will pardon a stranger to the customs of your province, fair damsel, if he has unwittingly trespassed against them; and be not angry though I add that you know not how the czar might prevail, unless you had seen him.”

"Natalia, my dear child," said Matweof, "you will surely accept the apology of a stranger."

Natalia wiped away her tears and smiled, and the czar questioned—"Have you seen the czar, fair damsel?"

"Never, never, but I shall never cease to invoke blessings on his name."

"What has he done to deserve such fervent predilections? Have you owed him any benefit?"

"He has done more for Russia than Iwan Basilides, who took three hundred cart-loads of silver from the duke of Novogorod, and conquered his province. The spoils of the enemy enriched only the court circle: our gracious czar hath made the mass of his people wiser and better, therefore they are much happier."

"Yet you would not allow him to uncover your lovely neck?"

"He is too truly the father of all his subjects to require from a poor girl the sacrifice of her self-respect."

"I now commend your spirit, my child," said Madame Matweof; but it is proper to tell the stranger gentleman, that it is only the privilege of an accepted lover to untie the knot he attempted to loose."

"I humbly crave forgiveness," said the czar.

"Indeed, you have cruelly vexed me," answered Natalia. "I esteemed you as one of the best men in the world — always excepting our sovereign lord Alexius."

"Now, you are ready to be in tears again. Come away, and bustle about, to forget an affront which was not intended."

So speaking, Madame Matweof retired with Natalia; and the czar said, "it is time to ask thee, Matweof, if thou hast found a mate for thy pretty apprehensive dove?"

"None, my liege, except the young Eastern she has dismissed."

"I have been more successful. I know an admirer, who will take Natalia without any dowry but her own charms."

"God and St. Nicholas reward your highness! My utmost gratitude is a poor offering, but it is ardent and sincere. I shall not presume with inquiries, since your highness will not throw away the girl who has been honored by your approbation."

"Why should I keep thee in suspense, my good Matweof? The husband I have destined for Natalia is myself. If she will be mine, our nuptials shall be celebrated without delay."

Matweof fell at the feet of his sovereign with incoherent bursts of gratitude. The czar desired him to rise and compose his mind; but Matweof said he was now master of his own feelings, and besought his liege lord to grant him a boon. Alexius encouraged him to ask with all freedom and Matweof resumed—"My sovereign lord! since a faithful and devoted servant is permitted, he most humbly implores your highness not to decide finally in favor of Natalia, until the noble and beautiful of the empire shall present themselves at the Kremlin, in obedience to a royal summons. That I desire the elevation and happiness of my ward cannot be doubted; but it is my duty first to consider the prospects of my most gracious lord. All Russia will be gratified to have the daughters of the land entitled to a chance for the most exalted distinction; and if Natalia be still preferred, she may still wait the royal mandate."

The czar leaned his forehead on his hand some minutes, and then replied; "It is not by a mandate—it is by her free consent I desire to win Natalia. I wish to talk with her in private; and before you send her hither, let me satisfy your disinterested loyalty by telling you I shall assemble the beauties of the empire, as you have wisely counselled."

Matweof brought Natalia to the *soi-disant* merchant, and left her. The merchant declared his love, and with modest grace was accepted, yet in broken and scarcely audible words. After an effusion of tender transport, he subjoined, "But

there is news in the city to-day: it is reported that all the beauties of the empire are to be invited to the court by proclamation. My Natalia has required a month to prepare for the change of her condition; and perhaps before that tedious time expires, she may be raised to the throne, and if bereaved of her, life will be hateful to me. If you can resign the chance for royalty, and give me your hand before the public call for appearing at court, it would save me unutterable bitterness of anxiety."

"Never shall Natalia hesitate to spare you anxiety. This poor hand is yours — yours only."

"You shall see or hear of me to-morrow, loveliest, most amiable Natalia — mine, mine forever! Dearest, I am urged by business to tear myself from you, and for your own precious sake I must despatch the affair."

Early next morning the royal proclamation was heard in all quarters of the city; and the czar sent messengers throughout his dominions, with the same summons to the young and lovely, when he returned to the palace. The heralds in all parts of Moscow performed this office each third hour during seven days. The merchant came not to see Natalia, and she never suspected that the sounds of the proclamations came from him. He often sent for Matweof, and his heart smote him when informed that Natalia hoped against hope, and though uneasy and dejected, never reflected harshly upon the seeming inconstancy of her lover. When Madame Matweof blamed him, she calmly asserted her confidence in his honor and faith, and was assured he could explain all that seemed mysterious in his conduct. She was very reluctant to appear at the court; but the czar must be obeyed. He sent her attire for the occasion; and she wore the embroidered kerchief, the amber beads, and golden image of St. Nicholas, given to her by the merchant of Kasan. Matweof attended her to the palace. The gorgeous magnificence of the scene at

first bewildered her senses ; and she was stunned by the loud reverberation of some hundred female voices, speaking at once in the lofty apartment. But hers was not a mind that could be wholly shaken from its poise, and her thoughts were soon collected, and fixed upon the merchant of Kasan. She was roused from a reverie by a flourish of horns, the ancient royal music of Russia. This music was produced in the same style which at the present day is continued in the emperor's band, and in the band of the regiment of guards. The emperor's band consists of three hundred horns, each, by the intervention of the air, vibrating a single note. The performers have no written music ; but practice has given them such precision in the modulations, that at some distance the effect may be mistaken for a grand orchestra of instruments. Three prolonged flourishes announced the approach of the czar. Deep silence awaited his appearance. Natalia breathed quick with a variety of confused sensations, in which a dread of being torn from her lover still predominated. She sat as much out of view as could be permitted by the etiquette of the presence-chamber ; however, she was obliged to comply with the general rule, that the young ladies should stand in the front row, and their friends close behind them. The folding doors were thrown open, and in robes of state, embroidered with gold, his girdle and the hilt of his scimetar studded with gems, and a jewelled diadem on his head, the czar entered, followed by a multitude of boyars and gentlemen. He smiled and talked to the fair circle as he passed along ; yet his eyes were manifestly seeking an object. When he perceived Natalia, he bent his steps towards her, and Matweof whispered to her, "Look up, my child ; it is against all rules to cast down your eyes when the sovereign draws near. You must look at him or be guilty of contumelious demeanor."

Natalia was all obedience to her guardian. She directed her regards to the awful figure of supremacy, and instantly recog-

nized her plighted lover ; but among the highest born and the most beautiful, dared she to flatter herself his heart would acknowledge her ? Her energies had been impaired by the uncertainty of her fate since the reputed merchant bade her farewell ; her spirits were fluttered by the dazzling novelties around her ; and now, to discover the ruler of her destiny in a sphere so immeasurably above her, was overpowering — her sight and consciousness failed. Matweof was carrying her out in a swoon, when the czar sent an officer of his household to shew the way to a private chamber, to which he hastened by a shorter passage. " Shut the door, Matweof," he said, " and open the lattice when you resign to me your lovely burthen. Now, stand by to witness the renewal of my vows."

The air soon recovered Natalia. She attempted to rise from the embraces of the czar, and to apologize for giving so much trouble.

" Do not deny me the innocent joy of holding you in my arms, most beloved Natalia," said the czar. " Say you forgive the cruel proofs of attachment and fidelity I have exacted. I am greatly to blame, and will make all atonement with my heart, my hand, my throne, my whole life : they are yours, my only love. Your color comes and goes, my charmer — let the air circulate round these swelling veins in your neck. May your Alexius now untie the handkerchief ? "

Natalia's face beamed with the most animated suffusion, as in low accents she breathed a modest assent. The czar pressed her lips, her glowing cheeks, and neck ; while Natalia, abashed, confused, and shrinking from these impassioned caresses, implored him to release her ; but her transported lover soothed her coy sensibility by the fondest protestations ; and concluded by addressing Matweof : — " My worthy friend, bear witness that your cherished Natalia is my affianced consort. I must now leave her, and return to the hall. Conduct her thither when she has regained composure."

Natalia soon reappeared in the brilliant circle. A crowd of attendants brought dried fruits, cakes of roses, apricots, and peaches, from Damascus; figs and comfits, from Turkey transparent apples, called *navlineh*, from Astracan; liqueur and numberless delicacies, from the southwestern regions of Europe. The ladies were dismissed with suitable presents and the bridal robe was sent to Natalia Kesilowna Narishkin. Never did the sovereign of all the Russias repent having shared his throne with the foster-child of Matweof's bounty. Her congenial mind sweetened his domestic hours, and invigorated his public labors to diffuse useful knowledge. She assiduously inculcated the peculiar attributes that ennoble the female character, and was herself a bright example of the virtues and attainments she recommended. To sum up, in a few words, her claim upon the everlasting reverence of her country—Natalia Kesilowna Narishkin was the mother of Peter the Great. She died, in childbed, when Peter was in his eighth year. Alexius survived her no more than five months. After the decease of his parents, his artful, ambitious sister Sophia, deprived Peter of all the opportunities for education, with the design to unfit him for assuming the reins of government: yet his extraordinary capacity surmounted all impediments; and he was self-taught in acquirements, seldom equalled, with all the aids of instruction, in the most enlightened era of science. By his stupendous powers and mighty efforts, he raised his empire from barbarism to progressive civilization; and the darker shades that mingle with the splendor of his achievements should be imputed to the cruel sister, whose selfish policy endeavored to corrupt and debase his disposition.

It only remains for us to record that Natalia repaid the kindness of Matweof, with a grateful veneration truly filial. He and his sons were appointed to places of trust, and acquitted themselves with talent, indefatigable attention, and faith-

ful zeal. Their attachment to Peter, the son of Natalia, exposed them to the rancorous hatred of Sophia. She extirpated their race; but they died, as they had lived, with an irreproachable good name.—*Bowring's Cabinet.*

C O N J U G A L L O V E .

A VISION.

WHILE deeply musing on celestial themes,
And sweetly wrapt in beatific dreams,
One morn, a voice from yonder shining spheres,
In heavenly warblings, thrill'd upon my ears ;
And, soft descending from his azure height,
Thus spoke the holy messenger of light :
“ We have perceived, O man ! thou dost employ
Such thoughts as angels in the skies enjoy,
And that to thee the knowledge may be given
To tell frail mortals of the joys of heaven.
Now to thy view, upborne on wings of air,
We'll full display a sainted nuptial pair.”
When, lo ! appear'd, like some resplendent star,
In yon ethereal plains, a radiant car ;
Still softly driving, near the earth it drew,
Unshaken by the winds that gently blew ;
Through azure fields, by snowy steeds, was drawn
This diamond chariot, brilliant as the dawn ;
In which were placed two forms divinely bright,
Deck'd in the dazzling robes of heavenly light ;

Whilst in each hand was held a milk-white dove,
Delightful emblem of unvaried love !
And as they gently waved each shining crest,
The angels me with melting voice address'd :
“ Wilt thou, O mortal man, and child of care,
That we to thee should nigher still appear ?
But lest we come too near, alas ! take heed,
The sad event thou well mayst dread indeed !
Thy powers may all be lost, unhappy youth,
In the celestial blaze of LOVE and TRUTH,
Derived from yonder skies divinely pure,
Which shall through all eternity endure.”
I bow'd assent, the chariot forward prest,
While they with looks of mildness still address'd :
“ We are a pair descended from above,
Who know the pure delights of wedded love,
Supremely happy and in youthful prime,
Though thousand years have past, since yonder clime
Kindly received us from the earthly stage,
Where youth just wrote our names upon her page.”

To view the holy twain I fondly dared,
In whom such heavenly majesty appear'd ;
The husband in a robe of orange hue,
And velvet shoes ; and hose of azure blue,
And vest adorn'd with many a glittering gem,
And roseate plume, and sparkling diadem,
And silvery girdle reaching round his breast,

Bedeck'd with radiant pearl was richly drest.
From his resplendent eyes the holy blaze,
Derived from wisdom, darted purest rays ;
While in his face beam'd all the smiles of youth,
And all the splendor of celestial truth ;
Thus did the sainted son of joy appear,
Who whilom dwelt in this sublunar sphere.

What pencil now, alas ! shall vainly dare
Portray the beauties of the matchless fair ?
Can all the artist's magic power express
The splendid colorings of her sumptuous dress ?
Or form, with mimic hues, that placid mien,
That look of heaven, that beauteous smile serene ?
Ah ! no — to paint the nymph of light and love
His fond attempt must ineffectual prove.
Her sparkling hair, like threads of living gold,
Hung o'er her brows in many a graceful fold ;
And each fair lock that gently play'd around,
Pellucid gems and glittering jaspers crown'd
Her necklace, brilliant as the star of light,
Was form'd of amethysts and rubies bright,
Beneath whose kindling gleam a rosary hung,
With chrysolites and richest jewels strung ;
Her lucid robe, more white than Alpine snow,
Was deck'd with brilliants of the purest glow ;
A golden zone about her waist was bound,
And diamond bracelets clasp'd her arms around.

In her sweet aspect that delight was given
 Which spotless innocence must feel in heaven ;
 Her eyes, resplendent as the rising day,
 Shone forth with holy virtue's brightest ray ;
 And as I on her gaz'd with sweet surprise,
 My raptured soul just bursting from my eyes,
 She turn'd aside those blazing orbs of light,
 Whose heavenly splendor pained my feeble sight,
 And with the soothing voice of purest love,
 They spoke, and pointed to the realms above :
 In tender converse join'd this happy pair,
 While each soft accent warbled in my ear ;
 Such melting sounds till then ne'er cheer'd my breast,
 • I ne'er till then believ'd a pair so blest.
 At length they said, in soft and gentle tone,
 " We are recall'd to yonder blissful throne " —
 When, mounting in their car, they took their way,
 More swift than light, to realms of endless day.

Halcyon Luminary.



A SLAUGA'S KNIGHT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF UNDINE.

CHAPTER I.

MANY years ago there lived, in the island of Fühnen, a noble knight, called Froda, the friend of the Skalds, who was so named, because he not only offered free hospitality, in his fair castle, to every renowned and noble bard, but likewise strove, with all his might, to discover those ancient songs and tales, and legends, which, in Runic writings, or elsewhere, were still to be found ; he had even made some voyages to Iceland in search of them, and had fought many a hard battle with the pirates of those seas — for he was also a right valiant knight, and he followed his great ancestors, not only in their love of song, but also in their bold deeds of arms. Although he was still scarcely beyond the prime of youth, yet all the other nobles in the island willingly submitted themselves to him, whether in council or in war ; nay, his renown had even been carried, ere now, over the sea, to the neighboring land of Germany.

One bright autumn evening, this honor-loving knight sat before his castle, as he was often wont to do, that he might look far and wide over land and sea, and that he might invite any travellers who were passing by, as was his custom, to share in his noble hospitality. But on this day, he saw little of all ~~he~~ he was accustomed to look upon ; for on his knees there an ancient book, with skilfully and richly painted character.,

which a learned Icelander had just sent to him across the sea : it was the history of Aslauga, the fair daughter of Sigurd, who, at first, concealing her high birth, kept goats among the simple peasants of the land, clothed in mean attire ; then, in the golden veil of her flowing hair, won the love of King Ragnar Lodbrog ; and, at last, shone brightly on the Danish throne, as his glorious queen, till the day of her death.

To the knight Froda, it seemed as though the gracious Lady Aslauga rose in life and birth before him, so that his calm and steadfast heart, true, indeed, to ladies' service, but never yet devoted to one particular female image, burst forth in a clear flame of love for the fair daughter of Sigurd. "What matters it," thought he to himself, "that it is more than a hundred years since she disappeared from earth ? She sees so clearly into this heart of mine—and what more can a knight desire ? wherefore she shall henceforth be my honored love, and shall inspire me in battle and in song." And therewith he sang a lay on his new love, which ran in the following manner :

" They ride over hill and dale apace
 To seek for their love the fairest face —
 They search through city and forest-glade
 To find for their love the gentlest maid —
 They climb wherever a path may lead
 To seek the wisest dame for their need.
 Ride on, ye knights ; but ye never may see
 What the light of song has shown to me :
 Loveliest, gentlest, and wisest of all,
 Bold be the deeds that her name shall recall ;
 What though she ne'er bless my earthly sight ?
 Yet death shall reveal her countenance bright.
 Fair world, good night ! Good day, sweet love !
 Who seeks here in faith shall find above."

" Such purpose may come to good," said a hollow voice, to the knight ; and when he looked round, he saw the form of a poor peasant woman, so closely wrapped in a grey man-

tle that he could not discern any part of her countenance. She looked over his shoulder on the book, and said, with a deep sigh, "I know that story well; and it fares no better with me than with the princess of whom it tells." Froda looked at her with astonishment. "Yes, yes," pursued she, with strange becks and nods; "I am the descendant of the mighty Rolf, to whom the fairest castles, and forests, and fields of this island, once belonged; your castle and your domains, Froda, amongst others, were his. We are now cast down to poverty; and because I am not so fair as Aslauga, there is no hope that my possessions will be restored to me; and therefore I am fain to veil my poor face from every eye." It seemed that she shed warm tears beneath her mantle. At this Froda was greatly moved, and begged her, for God's sake, to let him know how he could help her, for that he was a descendant of the famous northern heroes of the olden time; and, perhaps, yet something more than they—namely, a good Christian. "I almost think," murmured she, from beneath her covering, "that you are that very Froda whom men call the Good, and the friend of the Skalds, and of whose generosity and mildness such wonderful stories are told. If it be so, there may be help for me. You need only give up to me the half of your fields and meadows, and I should be in a condition to live, in some measure, such a life as befits the descendant of the mighty Rolf." Then Froda looked thoughtfully on the ground; partly because she had asked for so very much; partly also because he was considering whether she could really be descended from the powerful Rolf. But the veiled form said, after a pause, "I must have been mistaken, and you are not indeed that renowned, gentle-hearted Froda: for how could he have doubted so long about such a trifle? But I will try the utmost means. See now! for the sake of the fair Aslauga, of whom you have both read and sung—for the sake of the honored daughter of Sigurd, grant my request!"

Then Froda started up eagerly, and cried, "Let it be as you have said!" and gave her his knightly hand to confirm his words. But he could not grasp the hand of the peasant woman, although her dark form remained close before him. A secret shudder began to run through his limbs, whilst suddenly a light seemed to shine forth from the apparition—a golden light—in which she became wholly wrapped; so that he felt as though Aslauga stood before him in the flowing veil of her golden hair, and smiling graciously on him. Transported and dazzled, he sank on his knees. When he rose up once more, he only saw a cloudy mist of autumn spreading over the meadow, fringed at its edges with lingering evening lights, and then vanishing far over the waves. The knight scarcely knew what had happened to him. He returned to his chamber, buried in thought, and sometimes feeling sure that he had beheld Aslauga; sometimes, again, that some goblin had risen before him with deceitful tricks, mocking in spiteful wise the service which he had vowed to his dead mistress. But henceforth wherever he roved, over valley or forest or heath, or whether he sailed upon the waves of the sea, the like appearances met him. Once he found a lute lying in a wood, and drove a wolf away from it; and when sounds burst from the lute without its being touched, a fair child rose up from it, as of old Aslauga herself had done. At another time he would see goats clambering among the highest cliffs by the sea-shore; and it was a golden form who tended them. Then, again, a bright queen, resplendent in a dazzling bark, would seem to glide past him, and salute him graciously; and if he strove to approach any of these, he found nothing but cloud, and mist, and vapor. Of all this many a lay might be sung. But so much he learnt from them all,—that the fair lady Aslauga accepted his service, and that he was now in deed and in truth become her knight.

Meanwhile the winter had come and gone. In northern lands this season never fails to bring to those who understand and love it many an image full of beauty and meaning, with which a child of man might well be satisfied, so far as earthly happiness can satisfy, through all his time on earth. But when the spring came glancing forth with its opening buds and flowing waters, there came also bright and sunny tidings from the land of Germany to Fühnen.

There stood on the rich banks of the Maine, where it pours its waters through the fertile land of Franconia, a castle of almost royal magnificence, whose orphan mistress was a relation of the German emperor. She was named Hildegardis; and was acknowledged far and wide as the fairest of maidens. Therefore her imperial uncle wished that she should wed none but the bravest knight who could anywhere be met with. Accordingly he followed the example of many a noble lord in such a case, and proclaimed a tournament, at which the chief prize should be the hand of the peerless Hildegardis, unless the victor already bore in his heart a lady wedded or betrothed to him; for the lists were not to be closed to any brave warrior of equal birth, that the contest of strength and courage might be so much the richer in competitors.

Now the renowned Froda had tidings of this from his German brethren in arms; and he prepared himself to appear at the festival. Before all things, he forged for himself a splendid suit of armor; as, indeed, he was the most excellent armorer of the north, far-famed as it is for skill in that art. He worked the helmet out in pure gold, and formed it so that it seemed to be covered with bright flowing locks, which called to mind Aslauga's tresses. He also fashioned on the breastplate of his armor, overlaid with silver, a golden image, in half relief, which represented Aslauga in her veil of flowing locks, that he might make known, even at the beginning of the tournament — "This knight, bearing the image of a

lady upon his breast, fights not for the hand of the beautiful Hildegardis, but only for the joy of battle, and for knightly fame." Then he took out of his stables a beautiful Danish steed, embarked it carefully on board a vessel, and sailed prosperously to the opposite shore.

CHAPTER II.

In one of those fair beech-woods, which abound in the fertile land of Germany, he fell in with a young and courteous knight of delicate form, who asked the noble northman to share the meal which he had invitingly spread out upon the greensward, under the shade of the pleasantest boughs. Whilst the two knights sat peacefully together at their repast, they felt drawn towards each other; and rejoiced when, on rising from it, they observed that they were about to follow the same road. They had not come to this good understanding by means of many words; for the young knight Edwald was of a silent nature, and would sit for hours with a quiet smile upon his lips, without opening them to speak. But even in that quiet smile there lay a gentle, winning grace; and when, from time to time, a few simple words of deep meaning sprang to his lips, they seemed like a gift deserving of thanks. It was the same with the little songs which he sang ever and anon; they were ended almost as soon as begun: but in each short couplet there dwelt a deep and winning spirit, whether it called forth a kindly sigh or a peaceful smile. It seemed to the noble Froda as if a younger brother rode beside him or, even a tender, blooming son. They travelled thus many days together; and it appeared as if their path were marked out for them in inseparable union: and much as they rejoiced at this, yet they looked sadly at

each other whenever they set out afresh or where cross-roads met, on finding that neither took a different direction ; nay, it seemed at times as if a tear gathered in Edwald's downcast eye.

It happened on a time, that at their hostelry they met an arrogant, overbearing knight, of gigantic stature and powerful frame, whose speech and carriage proved him to be not of German but foreign birth. He appeared to come from the land of Bohemia. He cast a contemptuous smile on Froda, who, as usual, had opened the ancient book of Aslauga's history, and was attentively reading in it. " You must be a ghostly knight ? " he said inquiringly ; and it appeared as if a whole train of unseemly jests were ready to follow. But Froda answered so firmly and seriously with a negative, that the Bohemian stopped short suddenly ; as when the beasts, after venturing to mock their king the lion, are subdued to quietness by one glance of his eye. But not so easily was the Bohemian knight subdued ; rather the more did he begin to mock young Edwald for his delicate form and for his silence—all which he bore for some time with great patience ; but when at last the stranger used an unbecoming phrase, he arose, girded on his sword, and, bowing gracefully, he said, " I thank you, sir knight, that you have given me this opportunity of proving that I am neither a slothful nor unpractised knight ; for only thus can your behavior be excused, which otherwise must be deemed most unmannerly. Are you ready ? "

With these words he moved towards the door ; the Bohemian knight followed, smiling scornfully ; while Froda was full of care for his young and slender companion, although his honor was so dear to him that he could in no way interpose.

But it soon appeared how needless were the northman's fears. With equal vigor and address did Edwald assault his gigantic adversary, so that to look upon, it was almost like one

of those combats between a knight and some monster of the forest, of which ancient legends tell. The issue too was not unlike. While the Bohemian was collecting himself for a decisive stroke, Edwald rushed in upon him, and, with the force of a wrestler, cast him to the ground. But he spared his conquered foe, helped him courteously to rise, and then turned to mount his own steed. Soon after he and Froda left the hostelry, and once more their journey led them on the same path as before.

"From henceforth this gives me pleasure," said Froda, pointing with satisfaction to their common road. "I must own to you, Edchen"—he had accustomed himself, in loving confidence, to call his young friend by that childlike name—"I must own to you, that hitherto, when I have thought that you might perhaps be journeying with me to the tournament held in honor of the fair Hildegardis, a heaviness came over my heart. Your noble knightly spirit I well knew, but I feared lest the strength of your slender limbs might not be equal to it. Now I have learned to know you as a warrior who may long seek his match; and God be praised if we still hold on in the same path, and welcome our earliest meeting in the lists!"

But Edwald looked at him sorrowfully, and said, "What can my skill and strength avail, if they be tried against you, and for the greatest earthly prize, which one of us alone can win? Alas! I have long foreboded with a heavy heart the sad truth that you are also journeying to the tournament o the fair Hildegardis."

"Edchen," answered Froda, with a smile, "my gentle, loving youth, see you not that I already wear on my breast-plate the image of a liege lady? I strive but for renown in arms and not for your fair Hildegardis."

"*My* fair Hildegardis!" answered Edwald, with a sigh. "*That* she is not, nor ever will be,—or should she, ah!

Froda, it would pierce your heart. I know well the northland faith is deep-rooted as your rocks, and hard to dissolve as their summits of snow; but let no man think that he can look unscathed into the eyes of Hildegardis. Has not she, the haughty, the too haughty maiden, so bewitched my tranquil, lowly mind, that I forget the gulf which lies between us, and still pursue her; and would rather perish than renounce the daring hope to win that eagle spirit for my own?"

"I will help you to it, Edchen," answered Froda, smiling still. "Would that I knew how this all-conquering lady looks! She must resemble the Valkyrien of our heathen fore-fathers, since so many mighty warriors are overcome by her."

Edwald solemnly drew forth a picture from beneath his breastplate, and held it before him. Fixed, and as if enchanted, Froda gazed upon it, with glowing cheeks and sparkling eyes; the smile passed away from his countenance, as the sunlight fades away from the meadows before the coming darkness of the storm.

"See you not now, my noble comrade," whispered Edwald, "that for one of us two, or perhaps for both, the joy of life is gone?"

"Not yet," replied Froda, with a powerful effort; "but hide your magic picture, and let us rest beneath this shade. You must be somewhat spent with your late encounter, and a strange weariness oppresses me with leaden weight." They dismounted from their steeds, and stretched themselves upon the ground.

The noble Froda had no thought of sleep; but he wished to be undisturbed, whilst he wrestled strongly with himself, and strove, if it might be, to drive from his mind that image of fearful beauty. It seemed as if this new influence had already become a part of his very life, and at last a restless dreamy sleep did indeed overshadow the exhausted warrior. He fancied himself engaged in combat with many knights,

whilst Hildegardis looked on smiling from a richly adorned balcony ; and just as he thought he had gained the victory, the bleeding Edwald lay groaning beneath his horse's feet. Then again it seemed as if Hildegardis stood by his side in a church, and they were about to receive the marriage blessing. He knew well that this was not right, and the "yes," which he was to utter, he pressed back with resolute effort into his heart, and forthwith his eyes were moistened with burning tears. From yet stranger and more bewildering visions, the voice of Edwald at last awoke him. He raised himself up, and heard his young companion saying, courteously, as he looked towards a neighboring thicket, "Only return, noble maiden ; I will surely help you, if I can ; and I had no wish to scare you away, but that the slumbers of my brother in arms might not be disturbed by you." A golden gleam shone through the branches as it vanished.

"For heaven's sake, my faithful comrade," cried Froda, "to whom are you speaking, and who has been here by me ?"

"I cannot myself rightly understand," said Edwald. "Hardly had you dropped asleep, when a figure came forth from the forest, closely wrapped in a dark mantle. At first I took her for a peasant. She seated herself at your head ; and though I could see nothing of her countenance, I could well observe that she was sorely troubled, and even shedding tears. I made signs to her to depart, lest she should disturb your sleep ; and would have offered her a piece of gold, supposing that poverty must be the cause of her deep distress. But my hand seemed powerless, and a shudder passed through me, as if I had entertained such a purpose towards a queen. Immediately glittering locks of gold waved here and there between the folds of her close-wrapped mantle, and the thicket began almost to shine in the light which they shed. "Poor youth," said she then, "you love truly, and can well understand how a lofty woman's heart burns in keenest sorrow

when a noble knight, who vowed himself to be her own, withdraws his heart, and, like a weak bondman, is led away to meaner hopes." Hereupon she arose, and, sighing, disappeared in yonder thicket. It almost seemed to me, Froda, as though she uttered your name."

"Yes, it was me she named," answered Froda; "and not in vain she named me. Aslauga, thy knight comes, and enters the lists, and all for thee and thy reward alone! At the same time, my Edchen, we will win for you your haughty bride." With this he sprang upon his steed, full of the proud joy of former times; and when the magic of Hildegardis' beauty, dazzling and bewildering, would rise up before him, he said smiling, "Aslauga!" and the sun of his inner life shone forth again cloudless and serene.

CHAPTER III.

FROM a balcony of her castle, on the Maine, Hildegardis was wont to refresh herself, in the cool of the evening, by gazing on the rich landscape below, but gazing more eagerly on the glitter of arms, which often came in sight from many a distant road; for knights were approaching singly, or with a train of followers, all eager to prove their courage and their strength in striving for the high prize of the tournament. She was in truth a proud and high-minded maiden,—perhaps more so than became even her dazzling beauty and her princely rank. As she now gazed with a proud smile on the glittering roads, a damsels of her train began the following lay:—

The joyous song of birds in spring
Upon the wing
Doth echo far through wood and dell,
And freely tell

Their treasures sweet of love and mirth,
Too gladsome for this lowly earth.

The gentle breath of flowers in May,
O'er meadows gay,
Doth fill the pure and balmy air
With perfume rare;
Still floating round each slender form,
Though scorched by sun, or torn by storm.

But every high and glorious aim,
And the pure flame
That deep abiding in my heart
Can ne'er depart,
Too lofty for my faltering tongue,
Must die with me, unknown, unsung.

"Wherefore do you sing that song, and at this moment?" said Hildegardis, striving to appear scornful and proud, though a deep and secret sadness was plainly enough seen to overshadow her countenance. "It came into my head unawares," replied the damsel, "as I looked upon the road by which the gentle Edwald, with his pleasant lays, first approached us; for it was from him I learnt it. But seems it not to you, my gracious lady, and to you too, my companions, as if Edwald himself were again riding that way towards the castle?" "Dreamer!" said Hildegardis, scornfully,— and yet could not for some space withdraw her eyes from the knight, till at length, with an effort, she turned them on Froda, who rode beside him, saying: "Yes, truly, that knight is Edwald; but what can you find to notice in the meek-spirited, silent boy? Here, fix your eyes, my maidens, on this majestic figure, if you would behold a knight indeed." She was silent. A voice within her, as though of prophecy, said, "Now the victor of the tournament rides into the courtyard;" and she, who had never feared the presence of any human being, now felt humbled, and almost painfully awed, when she beheld the northern knight.

At the evening meal the two newly arrived knights were

placed opposite to the royal Hildegardis. As Froda, after the northern fashion, remained in full armor, the golden image of Aslauga gleamed from his silver breastplate full before the eyes of the haughty lady. She smiled scornfully, as if conscious that it depended upon her will to drive that image from the breast and from the heart of the stranger knight. Then suddenly a clear golden light passed through the hall, so that Hildegardis said, "O, the keen lightning!" and covered her eyes with both her hands. But Froda looked into the dazzling radiance with a joyful gaze of welcome. At this Hildegardis feared him yet more, though at the same time she thought, "This loftiest and most mysterious of men must be born for me alone." Yet could she not forbear, almost against her will, to look from time to time in friendly tenderness on the poor Edwald, who sat there silent, and with a sweet smile seemed to pity and to mock his own suffering and his own vain hopes.

When the two knights were alone in their sleeping chamber, Edwald looked for a long time in silence into the dewy balmy night. Then he sang to his lute :

A hero wise and brave,
A lowly tender youth,
Are wandering through the land
In steadfast love and truth.

The hero, by his deeds,
Both bliss and fame hath won,
And still, with heartfelt joy,
The faithful child looked on.

But Froda took the lute from his hands, and said, "No, Edchen, I will teach you another song ; listen ! —

There 's a gleam in the hall, and like morning's light
Hath shone upon all her presence bright.
Suitors watch as she passes by —
She may gladden their hearts by one glance of her eye ;
But coldly she gazeth upon the throng,
And they that have sought her may seek her long.

She turns her away from the richly clad knight,
She heeds not the words of the learned wight ;
The prince is before her in all his pride,
But other the visions around her that glide.
Then tell me, in all the wide world's space,
Who may ere win that lady's grace ?
In sorrowful love there sits apart
The gentle squire who hath her heart ;
They all are deceived by fancies vain,
And he knows it not who the prize shall gain.

Edwald thrilled. "As God wills," said he, softly to himself. "But I cannot understand how such a thing could be. "As God wills," repeated Froda. The two friends embraced each other, and soon after fell into a peaceful slumber.

Some days afterwards, Froda sat in a secluded bower of the castle-garden, and was reading in the ancient book of his lovely mistress Aslauga. It happened at that very time that Hildegardis passed by. She stood still, and said, thoughtfully, "Strange union that you are of knight and sage, how comes it that you bring forth so little out of the deep treasures of your knowledge ? And yet I think you must have many a choice history at your command, even such as that which now lies open before you ; for I see rich and bright pictures of knights and ladies painted amongst the letters." "It is, indeed, the most surpassing and enchanting history in all the world," said Froda ; but you have neither patience nor thoughtfulness to listen to our wonderful legends of the north."

"Why think you so ?" answered Hildegardis, with that pride which she rejoiced to display towards Froda, when she could find courage to do so ; and, placing herself on a stone seat opposite, she commanded him at once to read something to her out of that fair book.

Froda began ; and in the very effort which he made to change the old heroic speech of Iceland into the German tongue, his heart and mind were stirred more fervently and solemnly. As he looked up from time to time, he beheld the

countenance of Hildegardis beaming in ever-growing beauty with joy, wonder, and interest; and the thought passed through his mind whether this could indeed be his destined bride, to whom Aslauga herself was guiding him.

Then suddenly the characters became strangely confused; it seemed as if the pictures began to move, so that he was obliged to stop. While he fixed his eyes with a strong effort upon the book, endeavoring to drive away this strange confusion, he heard a well-known sweetly solemn voice, which said, "Leave a little space for me, fair lady. The history which that knight is reading to you relates to me; and I hear it gladly."

Before the eyes of Froda, as he raised them from his book, sat Aslauga in all the glory of her flowing golden locks beside Hildegardis, on the seat. With tears of affright in her eyes, the maiden sank back and fainted. Solemnly, yet graciously, Aslauga warned her knight with a motion of her fair right hand, and vanished.

"What have I done to you," said Hildegardis, when recovered from her swoon by his care, "what have I done to you, evil-minded knight, that you call up your northern spectres before me, and wellnigh destroy me through terror of your magic arts?" "Lady," answered Froda, "may God help me, as I have not called hither the wondrous lady who but now appeared to us. But now her will is known to me, and I commend you to God's keeping."

With that he walked thoughtfully out of the bower. Hildegardis fled in terror from the gloomy shade, and, rushing out on the opposite side, reached a fair open grass-plot, where Edwald, in the soft glow of twilight, was gathering flowers; and, meeting her with a courteous smile, offered her a nosegay of narcissus and pansies.

CHAPTER IV.

AT length the day fixed for the tournament arrived; and a distinguished noble, appointed by the German emperor, arranged all things in the most magnificent and sumptuous guise for the solemn festival. The field-combat opened wide, and fair, and level; thickly strewn with the finest sand, so that both man and horse might find sure footing; and, like a pure field of snow, it shone forth from the midst of the flowery plain. Rich hangings of silk from Arabia, curiously embroidered with Indian gold, adorned with their various colors the lists enclosing the space, and hung from the lofty galleries which had been erected for the ladies and nobles who were to behold the combat. At the upper end, under a canopy of majestic arches richly wrought in gold, was the place of the Lady Hildegardis. Green wreaths and garlands waved gracefully between the glittering pillars in the soft breezes of July. And with impatient eyes the multitude, who crowded beyond the lists, gazed upwards, expecting the appearance of the fairest maiden of Germany; and were only at times drawn to another part by the stately approach of the combatants. O, how many a bright suit of armor, how many a silken richly-embroidered mantle, how many a lofty waving plume was here to be seen! The splendid troop of knights moved within the lists, greeting and conversing with each other, as a bed of flowers stirred by a breath of wind: but the flower-stems had grown to lofty trees, the yellow and white flower-leaves had changed to gold and silver, and the dew-drops to pearls and diamonds. For whatever was most fair and costly, most varied and full of meaning, had these noble knights collected in honor of this day. Many an eye was turned on Froda, who, without scarf, plume, or mantle, with his shining silver breast-plate, on which appeared the golden image of Aslauga, and with his well-wrought helmet of golden locks, shone, in the

midst of the crowd, like polished brass. Others, again, there were, who took pleasure in looking at the young Edwald ; his whole armor was covered by a mantle of white silk, embroidered in azure and silver, as his whole helmet was concealed by a waving plume of white feathers. He was arrayed with almost feminine elegance ; and yet the conscious power with which he controlled his fiery, snow-white steed, made known the victorious strength and manliness of the warlike stripling.

In strange contrast appeared the tall and almost gigantic figure of a knight clothed in a mantle of black glossy bear-skin, bordered with costly fur, but without any ornament of shining metal. His very helmet was covered with dark bear-skin ; and instead of plumes, a mass of blood-red horsehair hung like a flowing mane profusely on every side. Well did Froda and Edwald remember that dark knight ; for he was the uncourteous guest of the hostelry : he also seemed to remark the two knights ; for he turned his unruly steed suddenly round, forced his way through the crowd of warriors, and, after he had spoken over the enclosure to a hideous bronze-colored woman, sprang with a wild leap across the lists, and, with the speed of an arrow, vanished out of sight. The old woman looked after him with a friendly nod. The assembled people laughed as at a strange masquing device ; but Edwald and Froda had their own almost shuddering thoughts concerning it, which, however, neither imparted to the other.

The kettle-drums rolled, the trumpets sounded, and led by the aged duke, Hildegardis advanced, richly apparelled, but more dazzling through the brightness of her own beauty. She stepped forward beneath the arches of the golden bower, and bowed to the assembly. The knights bent low, and the feeling rushed into many a heart, "There is no man on earth who can deserve a bride so queenly." When Froda bowed his head, it seemed to him as if the golden radiance of Aslauga's tresses floated before his sight ; and his spirit rose in joy and pride that his lady held him worthy to be so often reminded of her.

And now the tournament began. At first the knights strove with blunted swords and battle-axes; then they ran their course with lances man to man; but at last they divided into two equal parties, and a general assault began, in which every one was allowed to use at his own will either sword or lance. Froda and Edwald equally surpassed their antagonists, as (measuring each his own strength and that of his friend) they had foreseen. And now it must be decided by a single combat with lances, to whom the highest prize of victory should belong. Before this trial began, they rode slowly together into the middle of the course, and consulted where each should take his place. "Keep you your guiding-star still before your sight," said Froda, with a smile; "the like gracious help will not be wanting to me." Edwald looked round astonished for the lady of whom his friend seemed to speak; but Froda went on. "I have done wrong in hiding aught from you; but after the tournament you shall know all. Now lay aside all needless thoughts of wonder, dear Edchen, and sit firm in your saddle; for I warn you that I shall run this course with all my might: not my honor alone is at stake, but the far higher honor of my lady."

"So also do I purpose to demean myself," said Edwald with a friendly smile. They shook each other by the hand, and rode to their places.

Amidst the sound of trumpets they met again, running their course with lightning speed; the lances shivered with a crash, the horses staggered, the knights, firm in their saddles, pulled them up, and rode back to their places. But as they prepared for another course, Edwald's white steed snorted in wild affright, and Froda's powerful chestnut reared up foaming.

It was plain that the two noble animals shrunk from a second hard encounter; but their riders held them fast with spur and bit, and firm and obedient, they again dashed forward at the second call of the trumpet. Edwald, who by one deep,

ardent gaze on the beauty of his mistress had stamped it afresh on his soul, cried aloud, at the moment of encounter, " Hildegardis ! " and so mightily did his lance strike his valiant adversary, that Froda sank backwards on his steed, with difficulty keeping his seat in his saddle, or holding firm in his stirrups; whilst Edwald flew by unshaken, lowered his spear to salute Hildegardis as he passed her bower, and then, amidst the loud applause of the multitude, rushed to his place, ready for the third course. And, ah ! Hildegardis herself, overcome by surprise, had greeted him with a blush and a look of kindness ; it seemed to him as if the overwhelming joy of victory were already gained. But it was not so ; for the valiant Froda, burning with noble shame, had again tamed his affrighted steed, and chastising him sharply with the spur for his share in this mischance, said in a low voice, " Beautiful and beloved lady, shew thyself to me, — the honor of thy name is at stake." To every other eye it seemed as if a golden rosy-tinted summer's cloud was passing over the deep-blue sky ; but Froda beheld the heavenly countenance of his lady, felt the waving of her golden tresses, and cried, " Aslauga ! " The two rushed together, and Edwald was hurled from his saddle far upon the dusty plain.

Froda remained for a time motionless, according to the laws of chivalry, as though waiting to see whether any one would dispute his victory, and appearing on his mailed steed like some lofty statue of brass. All around stood the multitude in silent wonderment. When at length they burst forth into shouts of triumph, he beckoned earnestly with his hand, and all were again silent. He then sprang lightly from his saddle, and hastened to the spot where the fallen Edwald was striving to rise. He pressed him closely to his breast, led his snow-white steed towards him, and would not be denied holding the stirrups of the youth whilst he mounted. Then he bestrode his own steed, and rode by Edwald's side towards the golden

bower of Hildegardis, where with lowered spear and open visor, he thus spoke : "Fairest of all living ladies, I bring you here Edwald your knightly bridegroom, before whose lance and sword all the knights of this tournament have fallen away, I only excepted, who can make no claim to the choicest prize of victory, since I, as the image on my breastplate may shew, already serve another mistress."

The duke was even now advancing towards the two warriors, to lead them into the golden bower ; but Hildegardis restrained him with a look of displeasure, saying immediately, while her cheeks glowed with anger, "Then you seem, Sir Froda, the Danish knight, to serve your lady ill ; for even now you openly styled me the fairest of living ladies."

"That did I," answered Froda, bending courteously ; "because my fair mistress belongs to the dead."

A slight shudder passed at these words through the assembly, and through the heart of Hildegardis ; but soon the anger of the maiden blazed forth again, and the more because the most wonderful and excellent knight she knew had scorned her for the sake of a dead mistress.

"I make known to all," she said, with solemn earnestness, "that according to the just decree of my imperial uncle, this hand can never belong to a vanquished knight, however noble and honorable he may otherwise have proved himself. As the conqueror of this tournament, therefore, is bound to another service, this combat concerns me not ; and I depart hence as I came, a free and unbetrothed maiden."

The duke seemed about to reply ; but she turned haughtily away, and left the bower. Suddenly a gust of wind shook the green wreaths and garlands, and they fell untwined and rustling behind her. In this the people, displeased with the pride of Hildegardis, thought they beheld an omen of punishment, and with jeering words noticed it as they departed.

CHAPTER V.

THE two knights had returned to their apartments in deep silence. When they arrived there, Edwald caused himself to be disarmed, and laid every piece of his fair shining armor together, with a kind of tender care, almost as if he were burying the corpse of a beloved friend. Then he beckoned to his squires to leave the chamber, took his lute on his arm, and sang the following song to its notes :

“Bury them, bury them out of sight,
For hope and fame are fled ;
And peaceful resting and quiet night
Are all now left for the dead.”

“ You still stir up my anger against your lute,” said Froda. “ You had accustomed it to more joyful songs than this. It is too good for a passing-bell, and you too good to toll it. I tell you yet, my young hero, all will end gloriously.”

Edwald looked awhile with wonder in his face, and he answered kindly : “ Beloved Froda, if it displeases you, I will surely sing no more.” But at the same time he struck a few sad chords, which sounded infinitely sweet and tender. Then the northern knight, much moved, clasped him in his arms, and said : “ Dear Edchen, sing and say and do whatever pleases you ; it shall ever rejoice me. But you may well believe me, for I speak not this without a spirit of presage — your sorrow shall change ; whether to death or life I know not, but great and overpowering joy awaits you.” Edwald rose firmly and cheerfully from his seat, seized his companion’s arm with a strong grasp, and walked forth with him through the blooming alleys of the garden into the balmy air.

At that very hour, an aged woman, muffled in many a covering, was led secretly to the apartment of the lady Hildegardis. The appearance of the dark-complexioned stranger was myste-

tious ; and she had gathered round her for some time, by many feats of jugglery, a part of the multitude returning home from the tournament, but had dispersed them at last in wild affright. Before this happened, the tire-woman of Hildegardis had hastened to her mistress, to entertain her with an account of the rare and pleasant feats of the bronze-colored woman. The maidens in attendance, seeing their lady deeply moved, and wishing to banish her melancholy, bade the tire-woman bring the old stranger hither. Hildegardis forbade it not, hoping that she should thus divert the attention of her maidens, while she gave herself up more deeply and earnestly to the varying imaginations which flitted through her mind.

The messenger found the place already deserted ; and the strange old woman alone in the midst, laughing immoderately. When they questioned her, she did not deny that she had all at once taken the form of a monstrous owl, announcing to the spectators, in a screeching voice, that she was the Devil — and that every one upon this rushed screaming home.

The tire-woman trembled at the fearful jest, but durst not return to ask again the pleasure of Hildegardis, whose discontented mood she had already remarked. She gave strict charge to the old woman, with many a threat and promise, to demean herself discreetly in the castle ; after which she brought her in by the most secret way, that none of those whom she had terrified might see her enter.

The aged crone now stood before Hildegardis, and winked to her, in the midst of her low and humble salutation, in a strangely familiar manner, as though there were some secret between them. The lady felt an involuntary shudder, and could not withdraw her gaze from the features of that hideous countenance, hateful as it was to her. The curiosity which had led the rest to desire a sight of the strange woman was by no means gratified : for she performed none but the most common tricks of jugglery and related only well-known tales, so

that the tire-woman felt wearied and indifferent : and, ashamed of having brought the stranger, she stole away unnoticed. Several other maidens followed her example ; and as these withdrew, the old crone twisted her mouth into a smile, and repeated the same hideous confidential wink towards the lady. Hildegardis could not understand what attracted her in the jests and tales of the bronze-colored woman ; but so it was, that in her whole life she had never bestowed such attention on the words of any one. Still the old woman went on and on, and already the night looked dark without the windows ; but the attendants who still remained with Hildegardis had sunk into a deep sleep, and had lighted none of the wax tapers in the apartment.

Then, in the dusky gloom, the dark old crone rose from the low seat on which she had been sitting, as if she now felt herself well at ease, advanced towards Hildegardis, who sat as if spell-bound with terror, placed herself beside her on the purple couch, and embracing her in her long dry arms with a hateful caress, whispered a few words in her ear. It seemed to the lady as if she uttered the names of Froda and Edwald ; and from them came the sound of a flute, which, clear and silvery as were its tones, seemed to lull her into a trance. She could indeed move her limbs, but only to follow those sounds, which like a silver net-work floated round the hideous form of the old woman. She moved from the chamber, and Hildegardis followed her through all her slumbering maidens, still singing softly as she went, " Ye maidens, ye maidens, I wander by night."

Without the castle, accompanied by squire and groom, stood the gigantic Bohemian warrior ; he laid on the shoulders of the crone a bag of gold so heavy that she sank half whimpering, half laughing, on the ground ; then lifted the entranced Hildegardis on his steed, and galloped with her silently into the ever-deepening gloom of night.

"All ye noble lords and knights, who yesterday contended gallantly for the prize of victory and the hand of the peerless Hildegardis, arise, arise ! saddle your steeds, and to the rescue ! The peerless Hildegardis is carried away ! "

Thus proclaimed many a herald through castle and town, in the bright red dawn of the following day ; and on all sides rose the dust from the tread of knights and noble squires along those roads by which so lately, in the evening twilight, Hildegaridis in proud repose had gazed on her approaching suitors.

Two of them, well known to us, remained inseparably together ; but they knew as little as the others whether they had taken the right direction ; for how and when the adored lady could have disappeared from her apartments, was still to the whole castle a fearful and mysterious secret.

Edwald and Froda rode as long as the sun moved over their heads, unwearied as he ; and now when he sank in the waves of the river, they thought to win the race from him, and still spurred on their jaded steeds. But the noble animals staggered and panted, and the knights were constrained to grant them some little refreshment in a grassy meadow. Secure of bringing them back at their first call, their masters removed both bit and curb, that they might be refreshed with the green pasture, and with the deep blue waters of the Maine, while they themselves reposed under the shade of a neighboring thicket of alders.

And deep in the cool dark shade, there shone, as it were, a mild but clear sparkling light, and checked the speech of Froda, who at that moment was beginning to tell his friend the tale of his knightly service to his sovereign lady, which had been delayed hitherto, first by Edwald's sadness, and then by the haste of their journey. Ah, well did Froda know that lovely golden light ! "Let us follow it, Edchen," said he in a low tone, "and leave the horses awhile in their pasture." Edwald in silence followed his companion's advice. A secret voice,

half sweet, half fearful, seemed to tell him that here was the path, the only right path to Hildegardis. Once only he said in astonishment, "Never before have I seen the evening glow shine on the leaves so brightly." Froda shook his head with a smile, and they pursued in silence their unknown track.

When they came forth on the other side of the alder-thicket upon the bank of the Maine, which almost wound round it, Edwald saw well that another glow than that of evening was shining on them, for dark clouds of night already covered the heavens, and the guiding light stood fixed on the shore of the river. It lit up the waves, so that they could see a high woody island in the midst of the stream, and a boat on the hither side of the shore fast bound to a stake. But on approaching, the knights saw much more; — a troop of horsemen, of strange and foreign appearance were all asleep, and in the midst of them, slumbering on cushions, a female form in white garments.

"Hildegardis!" murmured Edwald to himself, with a smile, and at the same time he drew his sword in readiness for the combat as soon as the robbers should awake, and beckoned to Froda to raise the sleeping lady, and convey her to a place of safety. But at this moment something like an owl passed whizzing over the dark squadron; and they all started up with clattering arms and hideous outcries. A wild unequal combat arose in the darkness of night, for that beaming light had disappeared. Froda and Edwald were driven asunder, and only at a distance heard each other's mighty war-cry. Hildegardis, startled from her magic sleep, uncertain whether she were waking or dreaming, fled bewildered and weeping bitterly into the deep shades of the alder-thicket.

CHAPTER VI.

FRODA felt his arm grow weary, and the warm blood was flowing from two wounds in his shoulder ; he wished so to lie down in death that he might rise up with honor from his bloody grave to the exalted lady whom he served. He cast his shield behind him, grasped his sword-hilt with both hands, and rushed wildly, with a loud war-cry, upon the affrighted foe. Instantly he heard some voices cry, "It is the rage of the northern heroes which has come upon him." And the whole troop were scattered in dismay, while the exhausted knight remained wounded and alone in the darkness.

Then the golden hair of Aslauga gleamed once more in the alder-shade ; and Froda said, leaning, through weariness, on his sword, "I think not that I am wounded to death ; but whenever that time shall come, O beloved lady, wilt thou not indeed appear to me in all thy loveliness and brightness ?" A soft "Yes" breathed against his cheek, and the golden light vanished.

But now Hildegarde came forth from the thicket, half fainting with terror, and said feebly, "Within is the fair and frightful spectre of the north — without is the battle ; — O merciful heaven ! whither shall I go ?"

Then Froda approached to soothe the affrighted one, to speak some words of comfort to her, and to inquire after Edwald ; but wild shouts and the rattling of armor announced the return of the Bohemian warriors. With haste Froda led the maiden to the boat, pushed off from the shore, and rowed her with the last effort of his failing strength towards the island which he had observed in the midst of the stream. But the pursuers had already kindled torches, and waved them sparkling here and there : by this light they soon discovered the

boat; they saw that the dreaded Danish knight was bleeding, and gained fresh courage for their pursuit. Hardly had Froda pushed the boat to the shore of the island, before he perceived a Bohemian on the other side in another skiff; and soon afterwards the greater number of the enemy embarked to row towards the island. "To the wood, fair maiden," he whispered, as soon as he had landed Hildegardis on the shore: "there conceal yourself, whilst I endeavor to prevent the landing of the robbers." But Hildegardis, clinging to his arm, whispered again, "Do I not see that you are pale and bleeding? and would you have me expire with terror in the dark and lonely clefts of this rock? Ah! and if your northern gold-haired spectre were to appear again and seat herself beside me! Think you that I do not see her there now, shining through the thicket!" "She shines!" echoed Froda; and new strength and hope ran through every vein. He climbed the hill, following the gracious gleam; and Hildegardis, though trembling at the sight, went readily with her companion, saying only from time to time, in a low voice, "Ah, Sir Knight! — my noble wondrous knight — leave me not here alone; that would be my death." The knight, soothing her courteously, stepped ever onwards through the darkness of dell and forest; for already he heard the sound of the Bohemians landing on the shore of the island. Suddenly he stood before a cave thick-covered with underwood; and the gleam disappeared. "Here, then," he whispered, endeavoring to hold the branches asunder. For a moment she paused, and said, "If you should but let the branches close again behind me, and I were to remain alone with spectres in this cave! But, Froda, you will surely follow me — a trembling, hunted child as I am? Will you not?" Without more misgivings she passed through the branches; and the knight, who would willingly have remained without as a guard, followed her. Earnestly he listened through the stillness of night, whilst Hildegardis hardly

dared to draw her breath. Then was heard the tramp of an armed man, coming ever nearer and nearer, and now close to the entrance of the cave. In vain did Froda strive to free himself from the trembling maiden. Already the branches before the entrance were cracking and breaking, and Froda sighed deeply. "Must I then, fall like a lurking fugitive, entangled in a woman's garments? It is a base death to die. But can I cast this half-fainting creature away from me on the dark hard earth, perhaps into some deep abyss? Come, then, what will thou, Lady Aslauga, knowest that I die an honorable death!"

"Froda! Hildegardis!" breathed a gentle, well-known voice at the entrance; and recognizing Edwald, Froda bore the lady towards him into the starlight, saying, "She will die of terror in our sight in this deep cavern. Is the foe near at hand?" "Most of them lie lifeless on the shore, or swim bleeding through the waves," said Edwald. "Set your mind at rest, and repose yourself. Are you wounded, beloved Froda?" He gave this short account to his astonished companions — how, in the darkness, he had mixed with the Bohemians and pressed into the skiff, and that it had been easy to him on landing to disperse the robbers entirely, who supposed that they were attacked by one of their own crew, and thought themselves bewitched. "They began at last to fall on one another"— so ended his history; "and we have only now to wait for the morning to conduct the lady home; for those who are wandering about of that owl-squadron will doubtless hide themselves from the eye of day." While speaking, he had skilfully and carefully arranged a couch of twigs and moss for Hildegardis; and when the wearied one, after uttering some gentle words of gratitude; had sunk into a slumber, he began, as well as the darkness would allow, to bind up the wounds of his friend. During this anxious task, while the dark boughs of the trees murmured over their heads, and the rippling of the stream was

heard from afar, Froda, in a low voice, made known to his brother in arms to the service of what lady he was bound. Edwald listened with deep attention ; but at last he said tenderly, " Trust me, the noble Princess Aslauga will not resent it, if you pledge yourself to this earthly beauty in faithful love. Ah ! even now doubtless you are shining in the dreams of Hildegardis, richly-gifted and happy knight ! I will not stand in your way with my vain wishes ; I see now clearly that she can never, never love me. Therefore I will this very day hasten to the war which so many valiant knights of Germany are waging in the heathen land of Prussia ; and the black cross, which distinguishes them for warriors of the Church, I will lay as the best balm on my throbbing heart. Take, then, dear Froda, that fair hand which you have won in battle, and live henceforth a life of surpassing happiness and joy."

" Edwald," said Froda, gravely, " this is the first time that I ever heard one word from your lips which a true knight could not fulfil. Do as it pleases you towards the fair and haughty Hildegardis ; but Aslauga remains my mistress ever, and no other do I desire in life or death." The youth was startled by these stern words, and made no reply. Both, without saying more to each other, watched through the night in solemn thought.

The next morning, when the rising sun shone brightly over the flowery plains around the Castle of Hildegardis, the watchman on the tower blew a joyful blast from his horn ; for his keen eye had distinguished far in the distance his fair lady, who was riding from the forest between her two deliverers ; and from castle, town, and hamlet, came forth many a rejoicing train to assure themselves with their own eyes of the happy news.

Hildegardis turned to Edwald with eyes sparkling through tears, and said, " Were it not for you, young knight, they might have sought long and vainly before they found the lost

maiden or the noble Froda, who would now be lying in that dark cavern a bleeding and lifeless corse." Edwald bowed lowly in reply, but persevered in his wonted silence. It even seemed as though an unusual grief restrained the smile which erewhile answered so readily, in childlike sweetness, to every friendly word.

The noble guardian of Hildegardis had, in the overflowing joy of his heart, prepared a sumptuous banquet, and invited all the knights and ladies present to attend it. Whilst Froda and Edwald, in all the brightness of their glory, were ascending the steps in the train of their rescued lady, Edwald said to his friend, "Noble, steadfast knight, you can never love me more!" And as Froda looked in astonishment, he continued—"Thus it is when children presume to counsel heroes, however well they may mean it. Now have I offended grievously against you, and yet more against the noble Lady, Aslauga." "Because you would have plucked every flower of your own garden to gladden me with them?" said Froda: "no; you are my gentle brother in arms now, as heretofore, dear Edchen, and are perhaps become yet dearer to me."

Then Edwald smiled again in silent contentment, like a flower after the morning showers of May.

The eyes of Hildegardis glanced mildly and kindly on him, and she often conversed graciously with him, while, on the other hand, since yesterday, a reverential awe seemed to separate her from Froda. But Edwald also was much altered. However he welcomed with modest joy the favor of his lady, it yet seemed as if some barrier were between them which forbade him to entertain the most distant hope of successful love.

It chanced that a noble count, from the court of the Emperor, was announced, who being bound on an important embassy, had wished to pay his respects to the lady Hildegardis by the way. She received him gladly; and as soon as the first salutations were over, he said, looking at her and Edwald,

"I know not if my good fortune may not have brought me hither to a joyful festivity. That would be right welcome news to the Emperor my master." Hildegardis and Edwald were lovely to look upon in their blushes and confusion; but the count, perceiving at once that he had been two hasty, inclined himself respectfully towards the young knight, and said, "Pardon me, noble Duke Edwald, my two great forwardness; but I know the wish of my sovereign, and the hope to find it already fulfilled prompted my tongue to speak." All eyes were fixed inquiringly on the young hero, who answered, in graceful confusion, "It is true; the Emperor, when I was last in his camp, through his undeserved favor, raised me to the rank of a duke. It was my good fortune, that in an encounter, some of the enemy's horse, who had dared to assault the sacred person of the Emperor, dispersed and fled on my approach." The count then, at the request of Hildegardis, related every circumstance of the heroic deed; and it appeared that Edwald had not only rescued the Emperor from the most imminent peril, but also, with the cool and daring skill of a general, had gained the victory which decided the event of the war.

Surprise at first sealed the lips of all; and even before their congratulations could begin, Hildegardis had turned towards Edwald, and said in a low voice, which yet, in that silence, was clearly heard by all, "The noble count has made known the wish of my imperial uncle; and I conceal it no longer, my own heart's wish is the same:—I am Duke Edwald's bride." And with that she extended to him her fair right hand; and all present waited only till he should take it, before they burst into a shout of congratulation. But Edwald forbore to do so; he only sunk on one knee before his lady, saying, "God forbid that the lofty Hildegardis should ever recall a word spoken solemnly to noble knights and dames. 'To no vanquished knight' you said 'might the hand of the Emperor's niece be-

long' — and behold there Froda, the noble Danish knight; my conqueror." Hildegardis, with a slight blush, turned hastily away, hiding her eyes; and as Edwald arose, it seemed as though there were a tear upon his cheek.

In his clanging armor Froda advanced to the middle of the hall, exclaiming, "I declare my late victory over Duke Edwald to have been the chance of fortune, and I challenge the noble knight to meet me again to-morrow in the lists."

At the same time he threw his iron gauntlet ringing on the pavement.

But Edwald moved not to take it up. On the contrary, a glow of lofty anger was on his cheeks, and his eyes sparkled with indignation, so that his friend would hardly have recognized him; and after a silence he spoke:

"Noble Sir Froda, if I have ever offended you, we are now even. How durst you, a warrier gloriously wounded by two sword-strokes, challenge a man unhurt into the lists to-morrow, if you did not despise him?"

"Forgive me, Duke Edwald," answered Froda, somewhat abashed, but with cheerfulness; "I have spoken too boldly: not till I am completely cured do I call you to the field."

Then Edwald took up the gauntlet joyfully: he knelt once before Hildegardis, who, turning away her face, gave him her fair hand to kiss, and walked, with his arm in that of his noble Danish friend, out of the hall.

CHAPTER VII.

WHILE Froda's wounds were healing, Edwald would sometimes wander, when the shades of evening fell dark and silent around, on the flowery terraces beneath the windows of Hilde-

gardis, and sing pleasant love songs; amongst others the following:—

Heal fast, heal fast, ye hero-wounds;
O knight, be quickly strong;
Beloved strife
For fame and life,
O tarry not too long!"

But that one which the maidens of the castle loved best to learn from him was this; and it was perhaps the longest song that Edwald had ever sung in his whole life.

"Would I on earth were lying,
By noble hero slain;
So that love's gentle sighing
Breath'd me to life again!

Would I an emperor were,
Of wealth and power!
Would I were gathering twigs
In woodland bower!

Would that, in lone seclusion
I lived a hermit's life!
Would, amid wild confusion,
I led the battle-strife!

O would the lot were mine,
In tower or field,
To which my lady fair
Her smile would yield!"

At this time it happened, that a man, who held himself to be very wise, and who filled the office of secretary to the aged guardian of Hildegardis, came to the two knightly friends to propose a scheme to them. His proposal, in few words, was this, that as Froda could gain no advantage from his victory, he might in the approaching combat suffer himself to be thrown from his steed, and thus secure the lady for his comrade, at the same time fulfilling the wish of the emperor, which might turn to his advantage hereafter in many ways.

At this the two friends at first laughed heartily; but then Froda advanced gravely towards the secretary, and said "Thou trifler, doubtless the old duke would drive thee from his service did he know of thy folly, and teach thee to talk of the emperor. Good night, worthy sir; and trust me that when Edwald and I meet each other, it will be with all our heart and strength."

The secretary hastened out of the room with all speed, and was seen next morning to look unusually pale.

Soon after this, Froda recovered from his wounds; the course was again prepared as before, but crowded by a still greater number of spectators; and in the freshness of a dewy morning the two knights advanced solemnly together to the combat.

"Beloved Edwald," said Froda, in a low voice, as they went, "take good heed to yourself, for neither this time can the victory be yours,—on that rose-colored cloud appears Aslauga."

"It may be so," answered Edwald with a quiet smile; "but under the arches of that golden bower shines Hildegardis, and this time she has not been waited for."

The knights took their places,—the trumpets sounded, and the course began, and Froda's prophecy seemed to be near its fulfilment, for Edwald staggered under the stroke of his lance, so that he let go the bridle, seized the mane with both hands, and thus hardly recovered his seat, whilst his high-mettled snow-white steed bore him wildly round the lists without control. Hildegardis also seemed to shrink at this sight: but the youth at length reined-in his steed, and the second course was run.

Froda shot like lightning along the plain, and it seemed as if the success of the young Duke were now hopeless; but in the shock of their meeting, the bold Danish steed reared, starting

aside as if in fear ; the rider staggered, his stroke passed harmless by, and both steed and knight fell clanging to the ground before the steadfast spear of Edwald, and lay motionless upon the field.

Edwald did now as Froda had done before. In knightly wise he stood still upon the spot, as if waiting to see whether any other adversary were there to dispute his victory ; then he sprang from his steed, and flew to the assistance of his fallen friend.

He strove with all his might to release him from the weight of his horse ; and presently Froda came to himself, rose on his feet, and raised up his charger also. Then he lifted up his visor, and greeted his conqueror with a friendly smile, though his countenance was pale. The victor bowed humbly, almost timidly, and said, " You, my knight, overthrown — and by me ! I understand it not."

" It was her own will," answered Froda, smiling. " Come now to your gentle bride."

The multitude around shouted aloud, each lady and knight bowed low, when the aged Duke pointed out to them the lovely pair, and at his bidding, the betrothed, with soft blushes, embraced each other beneath the green garlands of the golden bower.

That very day were they solemnly united in the chapel of the castle, for so had Froda earnestly desired : a journey into a far-distant land, he said, lay before him, and much he wished to celebrate the marriage of his friend before his departure.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE torches were burning clear in the vaulted halls of the castle, Hildegardis had just left the arm of her lover to begin

a stately dance of ceremony with the aged Duke, when Edwald beckoned to his companion, and they went forth together into the moonlit gardens of the castle.

"Ah, Froda, my noble, lofty hero," exclaimed Edwald after a silence, "were you as happy as I am! But your eyes rest gravely and thoughtfully on the ground, or kindle almost impatiently heavenwards. It would be dreadful, indeed, had the secret wish of your heart been to win Hildegardis,— and I, foolish boy, so strangely favored, had stood in your way."

"Be at rest, Edchen," answered the Danish hero with a smile. "On the word of a knight, my thoughts and yearnings concern not your fair Hildegardis. Far brighter than ever does Aslauga's radiant image shine into my heart: but now hear what I am going to relate to you."

At the very moment when we meet together in the course — oh, had I words to express it to you! — I was enwrapped, encircled, dazzled by Aslauga's golden tresses, which were waving all around me. Even my noble steed must have beheld the apparition, for I felt him start and rear under me. I saw you no more, — the world no more, — I saw only the angel-face of Aslauga close before me, smiling, blooming like a flower in a sea of sunshine which floated around her. My senses failed me. Not till you raised me from beneath my horse, did my consciousness return, and then I knew, with exceeding joy, that her own gracious pleasure had struck me down. But I felt a strange weariness, far greater than my fall alone could have caused, and I felt assured at the same time that my lady was about to send me on a far-distant mission. I hastened to repose myself in my chamber, and a deep sleep immediately fell on me. Then came Aslauga in a dream to me, more royally adorned than ever; she placed herself at the head of my couch, and said, 'Haste to array thyself in all the splendor of thy silver armor, for thou art not the wedded-guest alone, thou art also the—'

"And before she could speak the word, my dream had melted away, and I felt a longing desire to fulfil her gracious command, and rejoiced in my heart. But in the midst of the festival, I seemed to myself more lonely than in all my life before, and I cannot cease to ponder what that unspoken word of my lady could be intended to announce."

"You are of a far loftier spirit than I am, Froda," said Edwald after a silence, "and I cannot soar with you into the sphere of your joys. But tell me, has it never awakened a deep pang within you that you serve a lady so withdrawn from you — alas! a lady, who is almost ever invisible?"

"No, Edwald, not so," answered Froda, his eyes sparkling with happiness. "For well I know that she scorns not my service; she has even deigned sometimes to appear to me. Oh, I am in truth a happy knight and minstrel!"

"And yet your silence to-day, — your troubled yearnings?"

"Not troubled, dear Edchen; only so heartfelt, so fervent in the depth of my heart, — and so strangely mysterious to myself withal. But this, with all belonging to me, springs alike from the words and commands of Aslauga. How, then, can it be otherwise than something good and fair, and tending to a high and noble aim?"

A squire, who had hastened after them, announced that the knightly bridegroom was expected for the torch-dance; and as they returned, Edwald entreated his friend to take his place in the solemn dance next to him and Hildegardis. Froda inclined his head in token of friendly assent.

The horns and hautboys had already sounded their solemn invitation; Edwald hastened to give his hand to his fair bride; and while he advanced with her to the midst of the stately hall, Froda offered his hand for the torch-dance to a noble lady who stood the nearest to him, without farther observing her, and took with her the next place to the wedded pair.

But how was it when a light began to beam from his com-

panion, before which the torch in his left hand lost all its brightness? Hardly dared he, in sweet and trembling hope, to raise his eyes to the lady; and when at last he ventured, all his boldest wishes and longings were fulfilled.¹ Adorned with a radiant bridal crown of emeralds, Aslauga moved in solemn loveliness beside him, and beamed on him from amid the sunny light of her golden hair, blessing him with her heavenly countenance. The amazed spectators could not withdraw their eyes from the mysterious pair,—the knight in his light silver mail, with the torch raised on high in his hand, earnest and joyful, moving with a measured step, as if engaged in a ceremony of deep and mysterious meaning. His lady beside him, rather floating than dancing, beaming light from her golden hair, so that you would have thought the day was shining into the night; and when a look could reach through all the surrounding splendor to her face, rejoicing heart and sense with the unspeakably sweet smile of her eyes and lips.

Near the end of the dance, she inclined towards Froda, and whispered to him with an air of tender confidence, and with the last sound of the horns and hautboys she had disappeared.

The most curious spectator dared not question Froda about his partner. Hildegardis did not seem to have been conscious of her presence; but shortly before the end of the festival, Edwald approached his friend, and asked in a whisper, “Was it?”

“Yes, dear youth,” answered Froda; “your marriage-dance has been honored by the presence of the most exalted beauty which has been ever beheld in any land. Ah! and if I rightly understood her meaning, you will never more see me stand sighing and gazing upon the ground. But hardly dare I hope it. Now good night, dear Edchen, good night. As soon as I may, I will tell you all.”

¹ See the *Bart de la Motte Fouqué's Waldemar*—

“Let none henceforward shrink from daring dreams,
For earnest hearts shall find their dreams fulfilled.”

CHAPTER IX.

THE light and joyous dreams of morning still played round Edwald's head when it seemed as though a clear light encompassed him. He remembered Aslauga; but it was Froda, the golden locks of whose helmet shone now with no less sunny brightness than the flowing hair of his lady. "Ah!" thought Edwald in his dream, "how beautiful has my dear brother-in-arms become!" And Froda said to him, "I will sing something to you, Edchen; but softly, softly, so that it may not awaken Hildegardis. Listen to me.

She glided in, bright as the day,
There where her knight in slumber lay;
And in her lily hand was seen
A band that seemed of the moonlight sheen.
'We are one,' she sang, as about his hair
She twin'd it, and over her tresses fair.
Beneath them the world lay dark and drear:
But he felt the touch of her hand so dear,
Uplifting him far above mortals' sight,
While around him were shed her locks of light,
Till a garden fair lay about him spread —
And this was paradise, angels said."

"Never in your life did you sing so sweetly," said the dreaming Edwald.

"That may well be, Edchen," said Froda, with a smile, and vanished.

But Edwald dreamed on and on, and many other visions passed before him, all of a pleasing kind, although he could not recall them, when, in the full light of morning, he unclosed his eyes with a smile. Froda alone, and his mysterious song, stood clear in his memory. He now knew full well that his friend was dead; but the thought gave him no pain, for he felt sure that the pure spirit of that minstrel-warrior could only

find its proper joy in the gardens of Paradise, and in blissful solace with the lofty spirits of the ancient times. He glided softly from the side of the sleeping Hildegardis to the chamber of the departed.

He came back just as Hildegardis awoke ; she beheld, with wonder and humility, his mien of chastened joy, and asked him whither he had been so early ; to which he replied, with a smile, “ I have just buried the corpse of my dearly-loved Froda, who, this very night, has passed away to his golden-haired mistress.” Then he related the whole history of Aslauga’s Knight, and lived on in subdued, unruffled happiness, though for some time he was even more silent and thoughtful than before. He was often found sitting on the grave of his friend, and singing the following song to his lute : —

Listening to celestial lays, Bending thy unclouded gaze On the pure and living light, Thou art blest, Aslauga’s Knight !	Send us from thy bower on high Many an angel-melody, Many a vision soft and bright, Aslauga’s dear and faithful Knight !
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BLANCHE ROSE.

A TALE OF OLDEN TIMES.

THE bells of Toulouse were chiming for primes.¹ The spires, steeples, and turrets fluttered with pennons and banners, and clustered with caps and bonnets like swarming bees. The main street was lined by the Burgher guard, and crowded with citizens, strangers, troubadours, and minstrels, above whose motley show the windows and galleries were hung with cindon² and arras, and filled with scarlet gowns, furred tabards, and all the riches, splendor, and beauty of "*Bel Languedoc*." A deep stillness reigned in the crowd, and all eyes were turned towards the east gate, where a triumphal arch, crowned with laurel, palm, and the white cross of Toulouse stood as high as the bartizan of the city port.

"Santa Madre ! what jour de fête in this ?" said an old pilgrim, as he pushed through the men-at-arms at the barrier.

"In the name of St. Jacques de Toulouse, where did *you* come from ?" replied one of the sergeants,³ glancing at his cockle-shell.

"That is no point of your charge," replied the stranger ; "but I would know what saint you are going to celebrate."

"Truly we call him not saint as yet," replied the sergeant ; "though I doubt not he is as good as St. Dennis, or St. George, or any other St. Chevalier in the calendar ; but in respect to the canonization, he is yet only *Raymond de Toulouse* — 'La

¹ Noon mass.

² Fine white linen.

³ A soldier between the rank of an esquire and man-at-arms, who generally worked the engines.

Fleur de Chevalerie—‘*la lame de France*,’ our young prince that shall return to-day, with the glory of heaven and earth, from the holy croisade.”

The pilgrim crossed himself, and while he was yet speaking with the guard, the sound of cymbals, kettle-drums, and a “corps d’harmonie” came faintly through the still sunshine.

“*On viens!*” exclaimed the sergeant; and the billmen, eagerly clearing the passage, closed up their array, and stood silent under their arms.

The music advanced slowly, till the deep knell of an eastern march could be distinguished, and the thick heavy trample of horses upon the road; every eye fixed upon the gate, as the music approached, till suddenly the clattering hoofs and rolling drums echoed in the deep arch, and the dark mailed horsemen and forest of lances came through into the sunshine. The long black line of men-at-arms poured slowly down the street, till the bright tabards of the heralds appeared at the gate, followed by the great banner of Toulouse, and all the peers and paladins of the array.

In the midst of his knights, mounted upon a blanche Arab, and glistening in the white battle-habit of the cross, the Earl rode before his banner, surrounded by his officers, and followed by all the chivalry of Languedoc and Provence. His pale noble countenance was clear and serene as the sun that shone upon him, and his long black hair fell like waves of raven silk from the jewelled helmet and glittering lambroquin, which shone like a glory about his armed head. A rending shout, “*Vive ! Vive ! vive le Paladin del croix !*”¹ went up like thunder from

¹ Till the fourteenth century, the French language, particularly in the south, had great remains of the old Provengal and Romanish, once common to all the south of Europe; hence, even in writing, it retained many constructions since localized to Italy and Spain, and thus, for “de la” “à la,” “del” was used “del” “al,” “Rey” for “Roi,” Espée, for “Epée,” “del Rey and al Rey” for “du Roy and au Roi,” &c. hence the surname which yet remains in France, “Delcroix.”

the crowd ; and the waving of bonnets, scarfs, and glaives, fluttered and flashed, and glistened down the street before the banner like the tossing and glimmering of flowers before the breeze.

By the side of the earl, rode his sworn brother in arms — the beautiful and gallant Auguste de Valence, son to King Remi of Provence — called “*La Fleur de France*,” “*Le Bel du Monde*,”¹ and the second Knight of all the Christian chivalry ; but the eyes of the people past over him as he rode beside the young prince, who, in the opinion of the troubadours, came nearer the beau-ideal of chivalry, — “*Sir Galahad du Sangraal*,” than any other knight who had ever lived. All the way as he came, garlands, and crowns, and showering flowers rained upon his helmet and housings ; and the people wept, and knelt and blessed him, and held up their children to see his face, and cry “*Vive la Gloire de France !*” The young prince came white as his surcoat, and bowed his glorious head to the pall on his horse’s mane. “*Soli Deo Gloria !*” said he “*Soli Deo Gloria ! et non nobis DOMINI !*”

It was long before the court passed down the street, but at length the earl entered the Grande place, and as he passed under a large house near the cross, looked suddenly up to the galleries. That house alone in the square was silent and deserted, the silk curtains were drawn close in the windows, and the heavy galleries empty and desolate. The prince turned suddenly and spoke to the grand almoner, and the color came into the face of the old man, but what he answered could not be heard in the crowd.

In a few moments they reached the gate of the episcopal palace, and the long glittering lambroquins and tall lances poured through into the court till the gate closed, and the black column of men-at-arms filed past towards the castle. But the crowd still remained before the palace, and in a short

¹ Du monde was a superlative epithet frequently bestowed upon the extraordinary degree of any quality, good or bad. Thus there was “*The perilous Knight of the world*,” “*The beautiful Ladye of the world*,” &c. &c. &c.

time a sumptuous cavalcade of the city procession came through to the gate, and the stately companies of peers, knights, and ladies, began to arrive for the banquet, prepared to give welcome to their prince.

All the noon and till the sun grew low, the clangor of the wild eastern music came from the portals, and the gates-stairs, and galleries were crowded with valets, pages, pursuivants, and men-at-arms ; but as the evening came and the twilight began to fall, the quiet of closing day succeeded to the hurry of the noon, and only a bright page, or an over-wassailed trooper was seen here and there flitting through the dim courts, or elbowing the narrow street as if it was too narrow for a victorious crusader, who had ridden upon the plains of Zebulon and Naphthali.

It was near dark ; the Chateau was dim and still, and the quiet of feudal solitude had succeeded to the hurry and glitter of the baronial pageant and military parade. At times a sudden roar of songs and voices came from the ward-rooms, but only one still watch-light shone upon the moat, and already the pages were taking their respective turnpikes,¹ and the seneschal was putting off his furred gown within his closet ; for as yet the great had not fallen into those extravagant *late* hours which made them invisible to their *poor* suitors at *eight o'clock before noon.*²

In the midst of this quiet, a tall figure, wrapped in a dark mantle, came out from the west postern, and turned hastily towards the Grande Place. The full moon was rising over the dim houses as he entered the square ; and as he looked up to her bright face, it discovered the pale noble countenance of Raymond de Toulouse. He passed hastily to the house, which

¹ Old name for a winding stair.

² Latimer, in one of his sermons, complains that the dissipations and late hours of the courtiers had advanced to such an excess, that they were unable to give audience perhaps, before eight o'clock in the morning.

he had noticed at his entry, and stopping at a small port under the garden turret, unclosed the door and passed into a little wilderness of cypresses and olives. He walked forward through the dim alleys, like one well acquainted with their windings, till he came to a vast plane-tree, which overshadowed a little green seat beside the Garonne.

A white female figure sat upon the turf, her long black hair loose upon her neck, and her silk gown glistening on the grass like a continuation of the moonlight which glimmered on the water, and to which she gazed with such fixedness that the knight was at her side before she heard his step.

"*BLANCHE ROSE!*" said he in a still gentle voice; she started and drew a long quivering breath, but as she looked in his face, she sprung from the ground,— "*My own very dear prince and brother!*" she exclaimed, and fell upon his bosom, and wept without a word.

The prince held her in his arms and bent over her till her emotion subsided into the low tremulous sobs of an infant's tears. Several times the earl strove to speak; but his voice failed at that sad trembling breath that fluttered upon his bosom.

"Dear Blanche," said he at last, "what is this? — they would not tell me — but *you* will tell me."

The lady started and shuddered, and her face sunk closer on his mantle.

The tears came to the eyes of the young knight — "*My own dear Orpheline Ladye* — the child of my foster-mother — *you* do not fear to speak to *me*! — *to your brother?* look up on the face that used to rest on the same bosom — sleep in the same cradle — and this the hand that was once the little helpless hand that clung to the same breast with yours — Now to *HIM* be the glory! The battle arm that holds the thunder and the lightning against all that should do ill to my dear sister."

Blanche burst afresh into sobs, and would have sunk out of his arms but for his strong hand; but he supported her in silence, till at last her tears ceased, and she leaned still and breathless, and deathly heavy on his arm. Raymond looked upon her bright lovely head that lay motionless upon his cloak, and smoothed the raven locks from her pale brow. "Alas!" said he gently, "where is your own *white flower* that used to be so bright in these dark waves?"

"La-Blanche-Rose" trembled like the leaves that quivered in the moonlight—"Fallen—gone—withered in the dust!" she murmured faintly.

The earl's hand shook, but he did not speak, and for a long time they stood without a word.

Blanche rose up from his arm, and swept back the hair from her pale death-face. "Raymond!" said she, "I will speak to you as a knight's daughter should speak to a knight's son. I was—your very dear true sister. *I am*"—her voice choked and struggled—"no more your sister—no more my father's daughter—a poor—lost—fallen maiden! I was the last of his race that was the father of kings. I shall be the first—the mother of one—*who will never have a father!*" She sunk down upon the seat and buried her face in the grass.

Raymond stood silent and fixed, and held her hand—but it did not move again, and lay cold and still, and heavy as the dead clay. "My dear sister!" said he at last, "what, who has done you wrong?"

Blanche did not speak nor lift her face, but drew away her hand, and immediately it returned with something bright to the moonshine; as Raymond stooped it flew open, and he saw the glorious beautiful features of Auguste de Valence.

"*La Bel du Monde!*" he exclaimed.

Blanche did not move nor answer, and his eyes rested fixed upon the miniature, as it lay open in her passive hand.

"What has *he* done?" said the earl, in the deep, calm terrible voice with which he used to speak in battle.

Her voice spoke faintly from the ground ; “ *He* has shed the rose from my brow that shall *never* bloom again ! ”

Raymond fell on the ground, his long hair spread in the dust, and his bright noble terrible battle-front bowed like a child. The white fingers of the maiden closed convulsively upon the gold, and the bright robe trembled on her slender form, like the lights upon the stream.

Raymond rose up ; his lips were white as death, but his eyes calm and steady ; and he stooped and took her passive hand and kissed her cold lips. “ Ladye ! my very dear love and sister ! ” said he, “ it is gone ! it is passed away ! — tomorrow your white flower shall bloom on your brow, clear and stainless as ever it shone in the sun ! ”

Blanche started and glanced wildly up ; but the sudden light of her eyes fell, and she clasped her hands on her face, “ He is married to another ! ” said she.

Raymond grasped her hands. “ Look up ! ” said he ; “ look on the fair moon ; she is rising as you and I have seen her rise when we were happy, careless infants on this bank. When she rises again, you shall look upon her, clear, and bright, and spotless as her face that smiles upon you ! ”

Blanche looked long, and fixed, and calm upon him, and dropped her eyes, and shook her head. “ The grave — the fire that washes out all spot — the mercy of God shall take away my stain, but never man on earth ! ”

The earl turned away and held her hand, and the tears run down his face. At last he loosed his surcoat, and undid the white cross from his neck. “ I took it at the holy shrine,” said he, “ at His foot where all sins shall be forgiven ; it has brought me through battle and tempest, and the black death,¹ by His might it shall bring you through peril worse than death. Take it ; pray for me ; and when we meet again you

¹ The plague in general, in particular a dreadful pestilence which desolated the north of Europe in the 13th century.

shall be the bright, beautiful, glorious lady of the world that ever you were in life!"

He tied the cord on her neck, and laid the pearl in her hand, and long spoke and strove to console her, but she could not be comforted, and sat still and silent upon the grass; her hands dropped in the cold dew, and her eyes fixed blank and dim upon the moonlight that floated in the water.

Raymond stood and gazed upon her till his face grew white as hers; but suddenly the light came to his eyes, he laid his hand upon the cross of his sword — "by His might and His hope, *I hold* the spell of your fate!" said he; "to-morrow it shall be broken!"

The gray dawn was breaking in the forest of Maris, and the dim cold light began to glisten upon the pale flowers and the dewy leaves of the wood-sorrel and colt's-foot which clustered about the feet of the old oaks. No sound came through the still thickets but the chime from the distant convent, and the light trip of the buck pricking among the leaves; even at that quiet hour he started at the mass-bell, suddenly topped his cropping lips from the grass, and bent his ear, and held up his nose in the wind; but he returned to his browsing, and wavered through the wood, till he came to the brink of a small deep glade; he stopped suddenly, and pricked his ear, and glanced his bright eye into the hollow, and for a moment stood and felt the wind, but in the next his white single went over the long fern like a flash of light, and he vanished into the deep thicket. For an instant his short bound came from the moss, but nothing stirred nor appeared where he had looked, and the light began to brighten and the birds to sing, but all was still and solitary.

The red rose of the morning began to appear through the trees, and the white mist went slowly up from the glade, and under an oak leaned a tall dark man, his arms folded, his back

to the tree, and his brown cap and deep mantle scarce distinguishable from the knotted and fantastic shapes of the old trunks that stood about him.

As he leaned and gazed upon the path, a quick step rustled on the leaves, and suddenly the light noble figure of the Auguste de Valence came out upon the glade. For a moment he stopped and glanced round. The man rose from the tree, and dropped his cloak, and came to the green — *Raymond de Toulouse*.

Auguste cast his mantle, and put off his glove, and they drew their swords and confronted each other without a word. For a moment they stood upon their guard, point to point, eye to eye, foot to foot, and neither gave hit nor foin; but in the next Auguste made a feint and plunge that might have foiled the best hand in France, but the blade glanced like a reed from the sword of Raymond, and for several moments the glade echoed to the quick clash and the heavy fearful trample of the mortal assault. But it might have seemed only a skilful “passage of arms,” neither being able to foil the hand of his opponent, till Auguste made the foin that he was never known to fail, and the sword went through the kirtle of his antagonist, close beneath his arm. The point glittered at his back, and the blood gushed down his green hose, but he did not fall nor stagger, nor drop his hand; and they closed, and clashed, and showered blows, till the blood run from every limb, and breathless and exhausted they dropped their points, and stood apart to breathe. For an instant they wiped their brows and drew their breath, and undid their kirtles to the wind; and Auguste sat down upon a mole-hill, and the earl leaned to a tree, and each glanced at times to the other, till suddenly they started to the green, and renewed the battle with the same mortal determination. The sun was rising as they struck the first strokes; and whether it shone in the eyes of Auguste, or that the earl had the better, he made a

sudden feint, and in the next moment the hilt of his sword was against the breast of his antagonist, and the blade a red half ell beyond his back.

De Valence sprung like a stricken hart, and fell upon the turf without a word; the blood gushed out from his mouth and breast, and in a moment his eyes began to change, and his lips became blue and cold. Raymond threw himself upon his knees by his side, and clasped his hand, and raised his head, and strove to stanch the blood, and gazed wildly upon his closing eyes — “ God give mercy and grace ! ” he cried, “ that I should do this ! ”

Auguste opened his eyes and grasped his hand — “ True and noble friend,” said he, “ you were ever kind and faithful to me in our lives, and this that you have now done is the best and truest deed of all. I thank God — I bless you — pray for me — forgive me — but oh, *she* never can ! ” — and he turned his face to the earth.

The earl’s tears dropped fast upon his cold brow, and he held his hand without speaking, as his breath came in short painful sobs, and the cold death-dew rose upon his forehead ; he gave a sudden shiver, and his hand caught upon the hand of his friend — “ Say a prayer,” said he ; “ bid God sain ; and let *her* pray for me when I am gone ! ”

Raymond cast up a sudden look — “ Holy saints ! — and no priest ! — none to say him shrift ! ”

The dying knight pressed his hand — “ Hold up your cross,” said he, “ and let me look upon it till I pass away. If I had but a cup of water ! ”

Raymond glanced eagerly round the glade ; a little blue streamlet fell through the grass upon a hollow of the mossy rock, and hastening to the spot, he filled his bonnet at the well, and hurried back to the dying man. The eyes of Auguste had closed, but when the water came to his lips he opened them and looked up ; a faint light came to his cheek ; and he raised himself on the arm of his once brother.

"I will confess my shrift to you, my true brother," said he, "and you shall tell the priest, and pray for me, and there will be mercy."

The earl bathed his face, and held him in his arms, and lifted the cross before him; and the knight clasped his dying hands on his, and confessed to him, as if he had been a monk in holy quire. His strength ebbed away with his last words, and he sunk heavy and breathless upon the breast of Raymond. The knight dipped his hand in the water, and signed his brow, and put the cross in his cold fingers—"God be merciful to you and forgive you," said he, "and speak that word that I dare not speak, and that none is here to speak in his name!"

The hand of the dying knight closed upon the rood; his eyes fell, and one sharp shiver, and he stretched out, cold and still, and gone for ever.

The earl gazed on his void face, and held his hand till it grew stiff and cold, and the eyes slowly unclosed and fixed in the death-glare. Raymond shuddered, and clasped his hands, and laid his head upon the turf, and the cross upon his breast, and spread his mantle over him, and knelt, and wept, and prayed beside him. At last he rose, and dried his sword on his sleeve and put his bonnet on his head, and set his horn to his lips, and blew *the mort*.¹ In a few moments a little page came lightly through the trees with his white Arab; and, as he led up the horse, looked upon the cloak, and trembled and turned pale.

"Sit beside him," said the earl, "and watch that no beast nor bird come to do him wrong; and I will ride to the town, and he shall be buried as men should bury a king's son."

The sun was set, and the twilight was almost gone; all Toulouse was in motion: the great bell of the cathedral tolled

¹ The death-note, or the blast that was blown at the death of a stag.

its heavy knell over the town ; and the streets were crowded with a tide of people hurrying towards the main rue. All the way from the chateau to the great church was kept by men-at-arms, and a constant wavering stir went among the tall lances, an eager murmur of voices, interrupted only by the fearful toll of the bell that struck its death-knell at slow intervals.

"Gramercy ! what is this, that the great bell tolls," exclaimed an old peasant to his merchant as he pushed through the crowd ; "I never heard that knell but for the death of our earl."

"Then shall you well hear it to-day," replied the citizen ; "for though he is not, as you shall say, dead in his body, he is dead in his glory and knight's fame."

"Saint Mary ! of what speak you ?" said the granger.

"Know you *La Rose Blanche* ?" asked the merchant.

"*Peine de ma vie !*" exclaimed the old man, "do I know the moon, and the bright star when she rises at vespers ?"

"Then shall you not marvel that the earl had the greatest love for her that ever knight had for a lady," said the burgher.

"Nay, truly," replied the peasant ; "but I make great marvel to hear a bell toll, when all the chimes in Toulouse should be ringing merry !"

"You shall not make the lark sing at your holiday," replied the merchant, "nor a maiden's love come for your harping. This, that was the brightest that ever the sun looked on, minded a fair crown and broad lordship no more than yon should value a cowslip fee in a fairy-land ; and likely for that they had been foster-children together, she thought of Earl Raymond but as a maiden may of her true brother, and would not be his lady though he had been king of France ; at the least she *said* so. The count was near out of his mind, as all men know ; but that which men know not — alas, that it should be to say — on the evening that he was to sail for the

Holy Land, being alone with her to take his leave, fell such unknightly outrage as never prince did to a lady, unless it was Don Rodrique to count Palayo's daughter. The sweet gentle maiden never spoke charge nor word against him, but ever she was pale, and heavy and broken of heart, and none knew why, till it could no longer be hid, and her shame flew fast and far as ever went the renown of the '*Blanche Rose*,' that had never peer of any earthly ladye. Fearful!—fearful!—she had to dree¹ when the priest came to curse her, and the bishop to make her speak, and the proud peers, her kinsmen, spoke of burning her on a hill, like queen Guinever; yet she would never tell the name of her false knight till this hour. But now when the earl came, he was all confounded in her peril; and for his great repenting, he hath confessed and accused him to the bishop, and now would do all the amende that may be to the heart-broken maiden, and make her true lady and countess of Toulouse."

"And what is this that shall be done to-night?" said the peasant.

"The earl goes in his penance to the great church," replied the townsman; "and thereafter the Blanche Rose shall be your lady; and let no man nor maiden think her slight, because the silk mitten was not puissant as the mail glove."

"Truly I shall think her the truest and most dolorous lady that ever was named with lips," said the old man, "and the devil spit in his face that shall ever say contrar!"

As he spoke, a faint chorus of voices came from the chateau, and a great light appeared beyond the black crowd of helmets and lances. It advanced slowly up the street, and at length the heavy tread of feet could be heard through the crowd, and a choir of monks chanting the penitential psalms. The solemn strain approached, and rose and fell at intervals. till

¹ Endure.

suddenly the crowd gave back, and the white monks and bright torches came slowly into the square. All the convents of Toulouse followed in long procession, till a broad heaven of light shone upon the press, and discovered the dark shadows of the black penitents, preceded by their cross, and lighted by a thousand torches.

In the midst, bare-headed, and bare-footed, divested of all his feudal ensigns, with a torch in his hand and a chain upon his neck, Earl Raymond walked in the white gown of penance; but his face was whiter than the cindon, and his eyes bent on the ground before the gaze and murmur that passed before him. A thrill of grief, wonder, and admiration passed through every heart which had so lately seen his crowned head, riding through that street, in all the light and glory of victory and the cross; and at each pause of the choir, a deep "*Amen!*" answered from the crowd. As the procession came to the high cross, the chant ceased, the train stopped, and the heralds lifted their hands and cried "*Oyez, Oyez, so should it be done to all knights, traitors to orphelines and maidens.*"¹

A deep death-pause rested upon the crowd, and no voice answered back again; the heavy tramp went on, the chant rose up, and the procession passed on towards the cathedral.

The long lines of monks vanished like shadows within the deep arch of the great portal, till the white gliding figures reappeared in the light of the still choir, and the cowls, and gowns, and glittering glaives poured through the dim aisles, till the choir and nave was filled with the dark crowd. The church was hung with black, and lighted as for a soul-mass; and as the torches and the penitent advanced to the altar, the voices

¹Every knight by his oath was particu~~larly~~ sworn to succor and defend all maidens, orphelines, and "desolate ladies." Hence treason against any, in such character, was the highest act of villainy and infamy in a chevalier.

of the unseen choir, and the still peal of the organ, went up over his head, as if the saints and the seraphims mourned over him in heaven. Raymond wrapped his face in his mantle, and knelt upon the stone, and bowed his head upon the footstool of the altar, till the priest raised him, and set him on the "siege douloureux," in the sight of all the people.

The service of the penitents was performed, the monks extinguished their torches at the foot of the shrine, and the heralds advanced to the altar. Sir Raymond stood up and turned to the people, and the pursuivants took off his white gown, and displayed his knightly habit and belt of estate. There was a terrible pause, and not a breath passed in the chapel. The heralds advanced to the earl, and broke his sword over his head, and hewed the spurs from his heels, and rent the fur from his tabard; and immediately his shield and crest were spurned from the church door; the trumpets sounded on the steps and the heralds cried,— "*Raymond de Toulouse! Raymond de Toulouse! Raymond de Toulouse! traitor to God and his lady, and mansworn of his knighthood; traitor knight, so is thy name cast out from true knights, so I cast thy shame in thy teeth, and defy thee in the name of God, the defender of the orpheline and desolate!*"

The people stood cold and still, and hushed as death; and the blood went out of the earl's lips, till they were white as his kirtle. The heralds sat down, but Raymond stood still and vacant, his arms hanging to his side, and his eyes fixed upon the air.

The bishop rose out of his chair and took the book in his hand; for a moment he stood and looked upon the knight.—

"In the garden of God, one little white rose grew amidst the flowers, very fair and pure, and bright, the sweetest among the blossoms; the sun loved ~~to~~ shine upon it by day, and the moon by night: and the dew and the rain watered it in the heat, and the breeze kissed it in the morning, and said, God

bless thee, and he did bless it, till it was the fairest of the earth — and the trees bent over to keep it from the wind, and the birds sung to it at noon, and the angels of God looked down upon it, and blessed his name that he had made it lovely.

“God gave thee the flower, and the forest to keep and watch, and defend from all wrong; and he gave thee the oak, and the palm, the fair fields, the still, green wood, and all that walk therein — and if this had not been enough he would have given thee more.

“Thou spared to come to the cedar, and the oak, and plucked the little flower that was lonely, and put it in thy bosom when it was sweet, and when it faded, cast it on the ground to die, and went thy way!”

Raymond fell on his face before the altar; and the people wept and sobbed, and sunk on their knees, as if their hearts fell with his who bowed before them. The bishop laid his hand upon the book —

“When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive! Look up, my son; ‘God is merciful and great to forgive us our offences! — He will see thy repentance and say, *Thou shalt not die!*’ ”

The earl rose upon his knee, and the bishop laid his hand upon his head, and spoke the words of absolution, and laid the cross on his brow, and bid him rise. Raymond stood up and the prelate kissed him on the cheek, and belted him with a new sword; and the heralds braced clean spurs upon his heels, and put a crest of a new device upon his head, and cried, “God make thee a new and valiant knight, and keep these arms to his service, to aid the widow, orpheline, and every one distressed and desolate, and maintain the right against all men who may live and die!” Immediately the trumpets sounded, and the pursuivants proclaimed him, lord, earl, and knight; the furred mantle of state was cast over his

shoulders, and he came out among his people Raymond de Toulouse.

That night, before the moon went down, Rose knew how she was cleared—but long she lay and wept upon his feet and would not be comforted; and when at last her strength and mind returned, it was in the strength of his despair, to fly to the bishop, and declare the truth; the hand of Raymond held her like an infant on the grass, but she had no hearing for his words, and would but wring her hands, and cry to be released to do him justice, till she sunk exhausted upon the turf. He watched by her through the night, and in the morning, when her spirits ebbed away and the strength of her dilirium was past, she was subdued by his tears, and swore upon his hand. The light came into his face and he kissed her and rose up—“*You never broke your word,*” said he; “now I will leave you!”

On St. Bride's-day at noon, the earl, surrounded by all the chivalry and beauty of Languedoc, stood at the high altar, where he had done his penance. Blanche Rose bent before the priest in the white bridal amice, her pale brow glistening with pearls and gems, and the *white flower* shining like a star in the long glossy tresses that fell upon her neck for the last time.¹ The earl put the ring upon her finger, the priest set the coronet upon her brow, and the heralds cried her, Countess of Toulouse, at the high cross, amidst the shouts of the people, and the waving of ten thousand caps.

¹ As late as the 17th century long hair was only worn by unmarried ladies, and it was closely confined under the coif or *crestine* as soon as they became matrons. It was remarked as an impudent assumption, that the beautiful, but scandalous Countess of Essex (in the reign of James VI.) wore loose hair after her infamous repudiation of her husband, and intrigue with the Earl of Rochester.

All the city was in a transport, for the constancy "of the bright lady of the world," and the self-justice of her supposed traitor knight. "Certainly," said the Vicar of St. John, "I think him greater for this repenting, than if he had never had tache or spot, not to speak of *the ninety and nine in the wilderness*; he had then been but a *puisnie* saint, now he is lith and blood like to you and me, but so as you and I shall never be—the greatest mortal man that ever quelled sinful flesh."

A week of pomp and pageant, and all that the olden time held gay and splendid, passed through Toulouse like a night's masque, and again all returned to the quiet sunshine, and still business of a simple summer's day.

The countess lived in deep seclusion, partly for that the face of man was become terrible to her, partly for her feeble state, which might not suffer ceremony and fatigue. The leaves were falling, the birds had ceased to sing, and the sun looked sad and still upon the yellow fields, when the unconscious cause of her sorrow, was presented to the barons of Languedoc in the great hall of Toulouse; "I do not wrong them," said Raymond, to its heart-broken mother, as she wept at his feet,— "My blood runs in the veins of none living; there is none to claim the right—you shall make him worthy to hold the sword and the coronet of a brave people, and God and their service shall give him right, better than a name."

It was the vigil of the cross; the night was dark and still upon Toulouse. The quiet streets were silent and empty, and all lights had gone out, except here and there a red solitary candle shed its long still pencelle upon the waters of the Garonne. The black pile of the vast chateau rose like a giant over the dim town, and within the wide courts were silent and deserted, and all dark and quiet except the stamp of a horse that waited beside the postern, and one still solitary watch-light

that shone in an upper turret. About that light was gathered all the interest of Toulouse, and perhaps an eye, born upon the gifted night,¹ might have seen the dim spirits leaning together over the turret, speaking the destinies of him, the last of his race, who should inhabit those towers, and who now stood within that dim still room.

It was a small dark turret chamber, hung with coarse arras, and meanly garnished with such furniture as might become the use of a simple esquire, or frugal steward,—a low pallet, half concealed by a curtain of blue sey, filled a small recess beyond the hearth, and at its head stood a long white wand and a walking sword in a scabbard of green velvet. A black carved armoire and oak chest occupied the opposite corners, and the remaining space was no more than sufficient for a tall high-back chair of black leather, and wide olive-wood table, on which a number of papers, an almoniere, an aunlace, and a heap of loose gold lay by a wax taper that burned under the rood suspended against the wall.

Earl Raymond stood before the light in his travelling-cloak, and his gray seneschal sat in the chair, his embossed hands rested upon his knees, and his white bald brow lifted to the face of his master.

“ You know her not,” said the earl; “ *I*, who was nursed on the same breast, rocked by the same hand, have grown with her like the twin bud upon the stalk — *I* know her — and God knows her, the bright noble ladye of the world; — I loved her, I will not say *how* I loved her; she was very lovely to me — but I was only as a brother to her, how could I be more, and the glorious beautiful flower of all chivalry sworn to her service. Alas! that he had been true as I was, and I would have

¹It was an ancient superstition that persons born on Christmas-eve were endued with vision sensible of all spirits and supernatural objects. To this cause was referred the dark looks of Philip II. of Spain, whose mind was believed to be impressed by awful appearances to which he was subject.

been a brother to him, as she was a sister to me ! and since I am the last of my race, they should have had fair Toulouse and my broad earldom ; and I would have been the soldier of the cross, and prayed that they might have been happy."

" God be praised, that has given you to be happy with her yourself," said the seneschal.

Raymond looked upon him as the spirits may look on man that cannot read the secret thoughts of the world above.

" To-night," said he, " I go to the *Holy Land*."

" *Blessed Saints !* and leave your lady ?" exclaimed the seneschal.

The earl's cheek became white as his tabard, but his voice did not change : " Be you very true and gentle to her, as you have ever been to me," said he : " and serve her as if you were born in her father's house, as you were born in mine ; and she shall still be your lady, and her lonely orpheline shall be your earl, when I shall come no more."

" Alas ! alas ! what is this ?" said the old man.

The earl stood a moment upon his sword : " You have been young that now are old," said he, " you shall know that a maiden's love is like the sunshine and the sweet moonlight ; it must shine in its own summer and its own still hour, and cannot come through the cloud when you shall call it. I will never be the cloud to her face, nor a chain upon the heart, which I bound to me for its redeeming ; but she shall be bright and free to shine like the sun upon the flower, — and God send a flower to blossom in her light, and be sweet and bright and grateful to her as the rose to the morning, when I am — where the sun shall never shine again."

" And you will not come back !" said the old man.

Raymond laid his hand upon the cross — " *Never !*"

The old man fell on his knees, and bent his white head upon his master's hand, and wept like a child.

For a long time the count held his trembling hand, and

turned away his face, at last, "Aymer!" said he, "God reward your true and faithful service to me; I have done with this world; I was a solitary tree, without a parent, a brother, a sister, to fill my heart — the last of my race. *She* was a very bright flower to me, the rose to my bower, the sun to my glory, the lamp to my holy shrine; I am going — to die before the cross as your father and mine; and we shall meet together with them before His glorious throne."

The old man's sobs redoubled, and for a long while he knelt and wept, and the earl said no more. At length his sobs subsided, the stamp of the horse came from the gate; the earl lifted him in silence; for some moments he wrote upon the papers, and set his seal; and the old man told the gold and put it in his purse. The knight took off his hat, and kissed his furrowed cheek, and laid his hand upon his head, and for one moment grasped his hands, and looked upon the cross and turned suddenly to the door. The old man tottered after with the light; but Raymond put him back with his averted hand, and threw the cloak about him, and hurried down the stair. The groom started up in his seat and threw the bridle on the Arab, and Raymond leaped into the saddle; the boy touched his bonnet and said some words, but the earl gave no answer, and spurring through the gate, took the street towards the east port.

There is a blank in the chronicle of Toulouse; who could tell how Earl Raymond turned his back upon his people — the tower where he was born, the roof where he was nursed, the field where he had plucked the flower, and chased the linnet, the garden where the rose of his love had blown — that rose that was blighted, and faded, and never should bloom again — to him!

The monk did not write of it in his book, nor the trouba-

dour sing of it in his song ; they said only, “ *Raymond de Toulouse shaped the cross on his sleeve and went to Holy Land.* ”

It was the third evening after the earl and his company arrived at Acre. The men-at-arms were busily disembarking their horses to go forward for Jerusalem, and the knight sat upon a stone by the beach, looking upon the bright water and the sun that was going down, red and still, and far away on France.

While he yet gazed, a slender boy, in the dress of a page, came down the sand ; he stopped and hesitated, and looked towards the knight as he approached, but at last he came to his side. Sir Raymond did not look up, and the boy stood and held his bonnet and twisted the feather, and the color went and came in his face, “ *Sir Earl !* ” said he, at last.

Raymond started as if one had struck him, on the cheek, and at the sight of his face leaped from the stone and turned as white as clay. It was a moment before his look came back.

“ What would you, fair child ? ” said he, gently. The tears came into the eyes of the timid boy. “ *Sir !* ” said he, “ I am an orphan child. My lord, that was very kind to me, is dead ; I would serve you, if it please you.”

The earl’s breast rose, and he turned away, and looked upon the sea ; at last, “ From what country — what is your name ? ” said he.

“ *Albert de la feuille morte,* ” replied the boy ; “ my father was of Provence, ” and his breath fluttered as if the memory of his father and his land, rose in his heart.

“ And have you no friends ? ” said Sir Raymond.

“ I had — *one,* ” replied the child.

“ And where is he ? ” asked the knight.

The boy turned away, and sat down upon the grass, and leaned his head upon a stone.

The earl took his dark hand, and the tears came to his eyes

as he looked upon the slender fingers ; “Alas !” said he, “this was never meant to burnish a helm, and hold a black stirrup !”

“I will be very proud to hold the stirrup of a KNIGHT OF JESU CHRIST,”¹ said the child.

The earl stood still for a moment, and held his hand with a grasp, from which a mailed wrist might have shrunk, but the boy did not shrink nor tremble.

“God save you, gentle child !” said the earl, at last, “if you will be pleased to serve me, I will be, not a master, but a brother to you, while I am in this world ; and when I am gone, God will be a father.”

The page fell upon his knee, and kissed his hand, and the tears trickled fast to the stone, which was wet as dew where his cheek had lain. The earl did not speak, but raised him gently, and turned towards the town. As they went, he spoke him softly, and glanced to his dark beautiful features and faded habit ; he looked yet scarce sixteen years, and wore the simple hose and green kirtle, such as was usually the dress of pages in the south of France ; but except for this, and his accent, his complexion was so dark, and his short curling hair so raven black, none had believed that he had ever known another country than Greece or Syria. The earl discoursed him as they went, and wondered at his *gentilesse* and learning ; and when he came to his inn, bestowed him in the especial charge of his old minstrel.

“Here is a flower that I did not think to find in this desert world,” said he ; “I pray you be very gentle to him.”

The old man was himself a Provençal, and he laid his pillow in the alcove, and set his meat as if he had been his own son, and took his harp and played to him till he wept himself asleep like a stilled infant. “Certainly,” said he, when the earl

¹ There was an *order* of this title, but at an earlier period it was applied generally to Christian knights, and in particular to the knights of the Croisade.

asked about him the next day, “ never such a gentle child served among stern war men ! ” And in a little time, “ *Le page noir* was the *mignon* of all the court.” Unless at his service, however, he was always sad and alone, and never spoke of his native land and former days ; and if the rude men urged him, he turned away, and the tears came to his eyes, and he would go to the sand or the rampart, though the sun was never so hot, or the wind never so wild.

At length, upon the morrow of St. Turiel, the earl and all the knights in Acre set out for Jerusalem, on sudden news that the great assault should be given in six days. Through all that long and terrible march¹ Albert rode beside the stirrup of Sir Raymond, and when the Syrian sun burned at noon, and the “ dead wind ” blew at night, he never eat till he had eaten, nor drank till he had drunk, and served him at his board, and watched by him when he slept. When the heart of many a knight sank in his hauberk, and the eye of the night-guard closed under his helmet, Albert sat beside him, and fanned away the fly from his cheek, and the mouse from his pillow, and looked upon his face ; and when his lips shrunk, and his brow came dark, dropped his beads, and raised his cross, and said —“ God give thee rest ! ”

It was the night before the assault. The camp was still and quiet, and no sound came through the tents but the fitful stamp of a horse at the picket, or the distant clank of a hammer at the forge, where some man-at-arms still waited his armor for the morning. The stars shone bright upon the dark field, and at times the watch might hear the night-call upon Jerusalem ; and, as he walked before the tent, the whisper of shrift and absolution, where the knights made a *clean breast* for the “ battle

¹ It must be remembered that this was in the *twelfth century*, and in time of War — now it is only a ride of three days.

of God," and the rest in which so many should sleep when the night should come again.

Earl Raymond lay asleep in his tent, his banner by his side, and his sword at his head, where he had knelt before it when the sun went down. Albert sat by his shoulder, his pale brow fixed upon his face, and his still fingers rested on his crucifix. You could not see the breath come and go upon his lips.

The broad hand of the knight lay unbent upon the pillow, and his pale face calm, and his dark brow clear and smooth as a sleeping child. Albert had never before seen the deep frown relax from his front in all the nights that he had looked upon it. For a moment he glanced up, and a flush came to his cheek, and a light to his eyes; but all tears were gone, and they looked full and still as the calm stars that were above him. For an instant his lips moved, and he gazed upward; but again his eyes returned to the pallet, and his features to their watch.

All night he sat, and by degrees every sound died away: the horse was still at his picket, and the sentinel at his post, and for a short while there was a deep death stillness, and all was hushed in heaven and on earth. It was the dead hour—the turning of the tide—when the soul passes, and the spirits in the grave are loosed—slowly a faint sweet strain of music came by on the silence, and voices sung in the air—

Blessed is the heart when the sin-stain has gone;
Blessed is the brow that His light shines upon.

And ever a pale still light shone upon the brow of Albert, while he sat fixed and quiet as if he heard no sound, and felt no light; and, whether it was the monks that sung in the valley, and the moon that looked into the tent—but never song was so sweet on earth, and never light shone so fair upon a mortal brow.

At length a faint stir began to come from the field, and at intervals the jingle of bridles, the stamp of hoofs, the baying of

a hound, and a sudden foot passing quickly by the tent. In a short while the far cry of the mollahs could be heard upon the towers, and the pale gray dawn stole dimly through the curtain of the tent. Albert sat, and fixed his eyes upon the light, as now a horse, and now a man came by, and now could be distinguished the tread of heavy feet pouring through the sand. Suddenly a trumpet sounded at a distance, and the page started up, and laid his hand upon the breast of the earl. Raymond awoke. "The first trumpet has sounded," said the page.

The knight rose hastily, and put on his helm and hauberk. Albert laced his casque, and buckled the spur to his heels, and the broad belt to his side; and the earl knelt down before his sword, and dropped his beads, and looked upon the cross with a look that made Albert's cheek come pale. In a few moments he rose and grasped the page's hand, and laid his broad mailed glove upon his head, and sat down to the little table beside the pallet. Albert served his frugal meal, and took his trencher to sit by the door; but the earl made him sit beside him at the same dish.

"It is the last that I may eat," said he. "There will be no salt¹ between me and thee where we shall meet again."

Albert bent his head over the board, and said no word; but the large round tear fell on his plate.

The short meal passed in silence, and the haste of those who every moment expect to hear the trumpet sound to arms. As soon as it was ended, the earl rose up and crossed himself, and gave his hand to the page, and drank the grace-cup; and when Albert had pledged him, he went to his mails, and took out a heavy purse, and loosed from his neck a little white cross. "Dear and faithful child," said he, "God be gracious to you, and give you peace." He put the purse in his hand—

¹ The great salt-cellars were the division between the "gentles" and "simples" who sat at the same table in the old time.

"When thou and I shall part, return to thy country, and if thou hast none better—to mine, where thou shalt find a very gentle mistress, who will be to thee all that I would be."

Albert took the purse, and looked calm in his face, and bowed his head, and said him—"Yes."

The earl looked on him for a moment, but his eyes did not change. "Brave and constant child," he said, "God shall not forsake thee; and now—for none may know His will to-day—take this little cross that must not fall among his enemies. If He give us the victory, thou shalt bury it with me in this holy earth; but if in the great press, or the day shall go against us, and I may not be found, take it with thee, give it to my lady, from whom I had it, and say, 'Raymond of Toulouse is gone to his rest.'

Albert had not changed before; but at the sight of that cross, and the sound of those words, his color went out of his face, and the hand that he held out fell to his side, and he sunk down at the feet of the earl. Raymond lifted him to the pallet, and snatched the cruce, and hastened to loose his collar. The hand of the page closed upon his arm, and he opened his eyes, and sat upright. For an instant he gazed half conscious to the light: but there was no tear in his eyes, and no flutter in his breast, and he rose up to take the earl's command.

"Alas, my child!" said Raymond, "thou art spent and overwatched. Thy feeble body is too frail for thy spirit. Lie down and rest, and fear not—all will be well."

He put the cross upon his neck, and made him lie on the pallet, and covered him with his cloak, and taking his banner, went out hastily from the tent.

Albert started up and gazed after him, and looked upon the cross, and wept, and knelt, and laid it on his head, and bowed his forehead on the mat that had been touched by the helmet of the earl. Suddenly the trumpet began to sound, the quick clank of arms, and the deep tramp of horses went past as if the earth

■moved around him. Albert dropped the jewel, and listened, and gazed where the heavy sound went by. The long successive tramp continued without intermission, till a shock like a clap of thunder burst upon the stillness, and a far fearful rolling surge of shouts went up to heaven like the roar of a tempest. In another moment the whole camp seemed to tremble, bolt after bolt shook the walls of the city, and the mingled cries and shouts, and clash of arms, spread like a storm from the beach ; and as the tongues of the hundred nations rose and fell, came suddenly the faint shout of the French,—“ *Mont Joye St. Denis !* ” Albert started from the ground, and braced his dagger, and did on his bonnet, and rushed out from the tent.

The clear day was bright upon the camp, and the long black lines of men-at-arms were pouring though the white tents like torrents towards the town, but all beneath the wall was lost in dust and smoke, through which the tall black giant tower of assault rose almost as high as the ramparts, where the dim gray battlements could be discerned crowded with men. Albert stood upon the rock under the standard before the tent, and watched the black columns pouring into the cloud, which swallowed them in its darkness. As the sun approached, the faint flash of the crescents and crowded arms could be seen glittering along the ramparts, and at quick intervals the fearful shock of the *war-wolves*, sent up a cloud of dust from the wall ; and as it swept off, a deep black gap appeared in the battlements and glittering line of arms. All at once the vast dark mighty column of the tower began to move, and rose slowly out of the smoke till it looked over the rampart ; a thunder of shouts rolled up from the hosts, and suddenly the flash of arms and banners receded like a bright wave along the wall. In an instant a little bridge fell from the top of the turret upon the battlement, and a white knight, followed by a glittering stream of glaives and lances rushed over to the ram-

part. A terrific cry came from the turret, and re-echoed from the moat—" *Raymond of Thoulouse! Raymond of Thoulouse! !*" and Albert distinguished the glorious figure of his master and the white cross of France. One moment he gazed, one moment he knelt upon the rock, one moment lifted up his cross, and rushed down into the stream of the assault.

The black terrible tide went on like a torrent into the moat, and the storm of the escalade thickened under the breach; but nothing was visible in the thick darkness, and the black dense press went on and disappeared into the cloud, man over man, till it almost filled up the deep, black, visionless gulf of the moat which roared round it like the bottomless pit. At intervals the heavy shot¹ rebounded on the wall, and the rolling ruin, and the storm of the defence rained down fire, and thunder, and battle sleet, through the black cloud: but the slow, dark, iron tide went on—and on—and on—over the falling heaps, till suddenly there was an explosion as if the heaven and the earth burst amidst the darkness. A moment of fearful stillness prevailed, the smoke rolled away, and the breach appeared to the sun, and all the thick glittering stream of helms and crosses going up over the ruined wall like a swarm of locusts. Again there was rescue—again the charge—and as the cloud opened and shut—now helmets, now turbans glistened in the breach; but suddenly a broad bright gleam broke on the towers, and the white figure of Earl Raymond appeared on the top turret. A moment he stood amidst the smoke in sight of all the hosts, and suddenly mounting the bartizan pitched the white banner in the sun, and began to sing the battle-hymn of Toulouse. The field—the breach—the crowded towers sent up a shout like the sea roar, and as the

¹ The stones and various missiles of Balistæ, and other engines, were called *shot*, as the engines and their materials were called *artillery* several centuries before the invention of guns.

bright silk flew in the wind, the darts and shot clinked upon the knight's mail, and glanced through the fluttering banner like sharp sleet. Raymond stood still amidst the shower, waving his hand over the assault, and singing his chorus;

Soli Deo Gloria
Et Sancti Salvatori!
Corona de Victoria
Sub Crucis Vivi mori!¹

As the coming stream poured up towards him, a sudden crowding, a dark object appeared upon a turret, and the black bow of a scorpion moved on the wall, and levelled upon the knight. For an instant it lay upon the battlement, till suddenly the bright eye of the arrow looked at him over the stone; a universal cry and waving of hands and caps came from the assault, but Raymond stood still, waving his hand, and singing the song, till a wild cry, a flying shadow came through the smoke, and at the moment that the dart parted from the cord, *Albert* threw himself upon the breast of his master, the hissing shaft struck short and sharp in his back, and he dropped from the bosom of the knight upon the rampart.

The dart snapped upon the stone, but the bright point stood stiff and red through the breast of his coat; Raymond dropped the banner, and gave a cry of grief, and drew out the broken wood; and as the clear blood gushed after, tore open the breast of the page to stanch the wound, when, as he undid the gorget, he discovered, not the dark neck of a sunburnt boy, but the white snowy throat of a maiden bosom!

¹ In the middle ages the vulgar Latin was little more than a patois through most parts of Europe. There are some MSS. almost unintelligible from the number of barbarous words, and the confusion of Latin and native terminations; and in many serious pieces the language was little more pure than the doggerel rhyme in which the English monks satirized the ignorance of the Lollards.

“ My name is Tutivilus, my horn is blowen,
Fragmina verborum Tuttivillus colligit borum
Belzebub algorum Belial bellman dokorum ”

She turned her face to the stone — “Thank God!” she said, “I die for you, *as you died for me!*”

Raymond raised her eagerly in his arms — “Who! Who are you?” he exclaimed, looking wildly upon her dark face and snow-white bosom.

“I was — *Blanche Rose!*” wispered the page.

Raymond fell upon her face, and for a moment held her to his mailed breast as still and silent as herself; but suddenly he started up, and rending his surcoat, bound the fillets round her bleeding breast; but still as he wound fold over fold with wild eagerness, the red blood came through the silk.

“It is not painful,” said Blanche, “it will soon be past!”

Raymond dropped the last bandage, and gazed upon her with the fixedness of despair, as she lay still in his arms, her white passive face reclined upon his breast, and her cold hand resting quiet in his mail glove. For awhile she lay like one composing into sleep, and at last she lifted her heavy eyes —

“I am happy! I die in peace!” she said; and turned her face to his bosom like an infant to his rest; and one long tremulous sigh, and her breast came still, her hand unclosed, the smile fixed on her white lip, and the tear in her eye, and she lay calm, and still, and placid, like a child on its parent lap.

They buried them together in the valley of Jehosaphat, and raised over them a grave of simple turf; for he said, “Let our pillow be the earth where HE has trodden, and let HIS light shine upon us by day, and HIS dew come down upon our breast at night.”

There is a palm-tree at the head of the heap, and a little well at the foot, and one white rose of Sharon that blossoms very sweet over the brink, and sheds the incense of the earth over their breasts who sleep below.

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